FATHERS AND SONS: THE GENERATIONS OF 9/11

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ABSTRACT

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Fundamentalism stands as a frame for the internal logic of Oedipal revision. As fundamentalist entities, al Qaeda and the U.S. operate with a preference for tribal organization, election, the sacred text, and a megalomaniacal insistence on singularity and repetition.

The maternal homeland acts as the locus for Oedipal performance, where the military son attacks the Founding Father and permeates the maternal. Within globalization, many homelands disappear, necessitating adoption by the denationalized. When globalization does not go as planned, the U.S. solicits a victimizing event to facilitate a reformatting in a phenomenon I call aggressive victimhood.

Once the maternal homeland is compromised and inhabited by the victimizing agent (al Qaeda), the maternal homeland must be reconstituted through the use of memorial iconography. However, this iconography too is inhabited, as evidenced by the Islamic motifs in the World Trade Center, making architectural efforts the inscription of al Qaeda inhabitation.

To operate in the globalized world, actors must apply a cellular methodology. This allows for extreme mobility and for death without harm to the cellular community. While soliciting the victimizing event, the U.S. acts in a flawed cellular fashion,
compromising objectivity by implicating itself in the tactics used by al Qaeda and revealing itself as a similarly pseudo-“terrorist” state.

The Oedipus complex is insufficient to describe the events of September 11th. Though the maternal homeland remains stable, both the U.S. military son and the al Qaeda military son are sons and fathers. Consequently, the U.S. military son is unable to kill the father and permeate the maternal homeland, as the al Qaeda military son has invalidated the Founding Father and assumed his place. Since the al Qaeda military son-as-father is already internal to the maternal homeland in its globalized form, it is impervious to the Oedipal event, making any attempts to kill the al Qaeda military father futile. These are the terms of the new Oedipus complex.
This thesis is dedicated to all those who have died, are dying, and will continue to die as a function of U.S. foreign policy. Your deaths will not be in vain.
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Preface

The Actors

Ramzi Yousef (DOB unknown - ) is the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and currently resides in the highest security prison in the U.S., the Administrative Maximum Facility at the Florence Correctional Institute in Florence, Colorado (also known as “Supermax”). A native of the Baluchistan region of Pakistan, Yousef was also an integral planner (along with his uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed) of the Bojinka plot to blow up a number of airliners originating in East Asia, a precursor to the September 11th plot.

Mohamed Atta (9/1/68 – 9/11/01) was the mastermind of the September 11th plot. A native of Cairo, Egypt, Atta studied architecture at Cairo University and the Technical University of Hamburg-Harburg, where his connections to the al Quds mosque initiated a turn towards
fundamentalism. Atta acted as the leader of the Hamburg cell, and controlled hijacker operations upon entry into the U.S. up through the execution of the plot.

Figure 3

George Herbert Walker Bush (6/12/24 - ) was the 41st president of the United States, serving from 1989-1993, and also the vice president from 1981-1989, as well as a U.S. Congressman from Texas, a U.N. ambassador, and the CIA Director. A native of Milton, Massachusetts, Bush settled in Texas after attending Yale and serving a stint in the Navy during World War II, initially pursuing work in the oil industry before moving into the political realm. He is the father of six children: George W., Pauline Robin (1949-1953), John (Jeb), Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy.

Figure 4
George Walker Bush (7/6/46 - ) is the 43rd and current president of the United States, serving from 2001 to present, and also the Governor of Texas from 1995 until his election to the presidency. A native of Midland, Texas, Bush overcame a questionable past marked by drug and alcohol abuse to rise to the top of the political ranks, becoming president after the contentiously close 2000 election. Bush viewed September 11th as a charge to pursue a political ideology rooted in his faith and a desire to prevent further attacks through preemptive foreign policy initiatives.

Nachman Libeskind (DOB/DOD unknown) was a Holocaust survivor who was placed in a Red Army hard labor camp after fleeing into the Soviet Union to escape the Nazis, where he stayed until his release in 1942. After seeking refuge in Kyrgyzstan, Libeskind married his wife, Dora, and fathered two children, Ania and Daniel, subsequently emigrating to the U.S. after the war and taking up work as a printer in New York City.
Daniel Libeskind (5/12/46 - ) is a well-known international architect whose trademark is dramatic, angular structures which attempt to communicate loss, absence, and memory. A native of Lodz, Poland, Libeskind has lived in Milan, Berlin, and New York City, among other locations, and considers himself an American in spirit. He is the father of three children with his wife Nina. His most famous projects are the Jewish Museum Berlin (Berlin, Germany) and the Freedom Tower (New York City, New York, United States).

**The Oedipal Connection**

The Oedipus complex is fundamentally bound to a process of repetition that is also manifested in the circularity of the fundamentalist agent, which is a crucial locus for the analysis of pre and post 9/11 politics and the insertion of the moment within history. In the case of this singular historical event, an analysis of the three elements of fundamentalism, American Christian, Middle Eastern-Muslim, and European-Israeli-American-Jewish, are knotted together in the Oedipal system of the family romance suggesting that no event is utterly singular, and no subject is entirely autonomous on the historical stage of religious and political struggle. My thesis is engaged in a tripartite analysis of the literal/figurative pairings of Ramzi Yousef and Mohamed Atta, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, and Nachman Libeskind and Daniel Libeskind, by way of their Oedipal ramifications which are seen most specifically in the respective efforts of the proverbial sons to trump the deeds of the father figure via interaction/congress with the mother figure, America. This analysis addresses the interrelated manifestations of each Oedipal pairing in terms of eight main foci: fundamentalism and repetition compulsion, the Oedipal homeland, aggressive victimhood and the aggressive/death instinct, the Void, iconography, the cellular, the body without organs, and the specifics of the Oedipal pairings themselves. In so doing, the process of repetition compulsion central to
psychoanalysis and the understanding of trauma also becomes central to a writing under erasure of the moment of 9/11.

Each of the above concepts finds its manifestation in the three Oedipal pairings foundational to the event: Ramzi Yousef and Mohamed Atta, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, and Nachman Libeskind and Daniel Libeskind. In the case of Yousef and Atta, youthful treatment by parents (Yousef’s fundamentalist father, Atta’s indulgent mother) and a shared predilection for women and fluid identities bond the two beyond the simple act of repeatedly targeting the World Trade Center. In the case of the Bushes, youthful treatment by parents (H.W.’s stern father and W.’s absent father and authoritative mother) and the specter of family lineage bond the two beyond the desire for a U.S. global state and its impetus in the Middle East. In the case of the Libeskins, experience with the U.S. maternal homeland (a salvational entity for Nachman after the Holocaust and an idealized entity for the thankful Daniel) and selection of strong, single-minded wives bonds the two beyond their memorializing connections in the Holocaust and the U.S.

What results from the use of this background is a conceptualization of the Oedipal in relation to 9/11 that operates on an understanding of prevailing thought on the matter, while also dissecting these theoretical resources and using them to new and imaginative ends. This venture is undertaken in an effort to reconceptualize the application the Oedipal complex and articulate its unique manifestation in the events surrounding 9/11; in short, a reconfiguration of the Oedipal that accounts for the centrality of the maternal homeland and the maternal figure as a simultaneous substitution for the paternal, such that the father (like the fictive state) is always already illusory. In this case, the triangularity of the Oedipal struggle remains, as it does in
Deleuze and Guattari, but the hierarchy diminishes as the form breaks down, relativizing the father and son in relation to the mother and to each other.

**Repetition and Circularity**

To witness September 11\textsuperscript{th}, either in person or through one of the various media channels, is to be impacted by the event and its significant loss of life. However, to witness the event is not to know it, and a greater degree of reflection than has been devoted to the subject is required to understand the numerous forces at work that predate September 11\textsuperscript{th} by years, if not centuries. Commentators of all stripes have remarked at length upon the event, offering nationalist interpretations in both directions that paint the hijackers alternately as heroic martyr figures or barbarians, the targeted U.S. (if the state was in fact the target) as an incontestable victim or a tyrant deserving of such suffering. None of these commentators have satisfactorily accounted for the repetition evident in the event. The attempted destruction of the World Trade Center in 1993 and its eventual successful demise in 2001 stands as merely one among the many repetitions intersecting on September 11, others including the use of two planes, the two towers of the World Trade Center, and the two cities targeted by the attacks.

Whether it is the presence of Bush administration intervention in the Middle East as an inflammatory factor (in the Gulf War, its aftermath, and the post-September 11\textsuperscript{th} invasion of Iraq) or Daniel Libeskind’s efforts to thank the U.S. for its salvational function in a way that his father never could, repetition within the event establishes a circularity of particular relevance to the phenomenon of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is predisposed to repetition in its desire to create an ideal society based on its belief system, and predisposed to circularity in its desire to base that creation on a recreation of the society of the father (only more successfully). As both the hijackers and the U.S. act in a fundamentalist, extremist fashion before, during, and after the
event, both are on the same level as fundamentalist actors within the globalized world. The centrality of the endemic circularity within fundamentalism makes it a prime subject for analysis given its placement within the ruling ideologies of contemporary global struggles.

Such concerns do not hold the attention of current criticism due to the likely realization that this analysis would in fact implicate the U.S. as a prime actor in, if not solicitor of, the very event that it decries so vehemently. Guilt does not sit well on the U.S. conscience, as it problematizes the ideological purity that is central to the national identity as a bastion of freedom and liberty. If this degree of self-reflection and internal criticism is not welcome before the event, it is certainly less welcome after the event, and is nearly negated in the sweep of faux-patriotism and fear-mongering that dominates the immediate post-September 11th period. Should one care? After all, the event is over, and policy decisions within the U.S. are purportedly ensuring that such an event will never happen again, so what is the use of endlessly rehashing its origins? The answer is simple: fundamentalism characterizes the interactions of world actors; if we understand the circularity inherent to the actions of those actors, we may gain a greater understanding of fundamentalism itself, and therefore a greater degree of knowledge about the seemingly chaotic world around us. The fate of the world is at stake.

The Fundamentalist Process

Fundamentalism operates on the establishment of fundamentals, the universal assumptions upon which all belief systems operate. These assumptions include a tribal formation, a preceding period of ideological corruption (followed by necessary military action), and a totalitarian ethic rooted in the notion of election. Once the tribal form is attained, the period of corruption creates within the fundamentalist a desire to rectify the past through military action, with the blessing of a favoring deity. This rectification takes on the form of repetition
compulsion, which appears frequently in Freud and slightly less so in Lacan, and is used here to frame the generational continuity between fathers and sons. As the World Trade Center was a target in 1993, so it was again in 2001; as George H.W. Bush was president, so too is George W. Bush (himself repeating in the act of a second term), both choosing Iraq as a vector for globalizing efforts; as Nachman Libeskind saw New York as a locus of salvation, so too does Daniel Libeskind.

Since the fundamentalist entity needs a locus from which to operate, it must establish a homeland. In the course of its creation, the homeland takes on a maternal aspect due to its birthing of ideological tenets and further nurturing of those tenets within the ideology of the homeland. A founding group of early ideologues, fittingly called the “Founding Fathers” in the case of the U.S. homeland, take on the paternal role, enacting their ideologies within the territorial space of the maternal homeland. These parents give birth to the son as citizen who, seeing the cumbersome, dated methodologies of his traditionally imperialist father, offers a newer, leaner, less visible form of neo-imperialism in the form of the military state in the course of his Oedipal action against the father. Anxiety over the influence of the Founding Father and his accompanying ideologies is such that the military son adopts reactionary methodologies in direct opposition to those of the father, though in such direct opposition as to recall the ideologies at every turn.

Aggressive victimhood is the means by which the military state son enacts his globalizing effort. After undertaking an aggressive provocation, then establishing a posture of victimhood, the son elects to adopt a proactive, preemptive approach to inhabiting and transforming that space of victimhood. Since nearly any action is permissible in the case of self-defense, the son receives carte blanche in terms of response, and acts aggressively, choosing asymmetric actions.
This phenomenon is founded in the aggressive/death instinct. Where the aggressive instinct nullifies the civilizational necessity of loving one’s neighbor, the death instinct renders self-destruction as a means of self-preservation a tenable strategy within a guilt-enforced society. Aggressive victimhood operates in a realm of externalization, directing energies outward by sanitizing history and controlling language, a similar externalization to that performed by the death instinct (typically internal) in its transformation to the aggressive instinct (typically external).

Once the event has been solicited via aggressive victimhood, the maternal homeland collapses as a precursor to reformatted globalization, unintentionally drawing its global contents within its reduced borders and thereby allowing the implied space of memory therein to be inhabited by al Qaeda. Daniel Libeskind calls this space the Void within his architecture, the unilateral result of the global community collapsed by globalization, a verbalized, specified name for the nothing. If the Void were to exist simply as it is passively produced in his Freedom Tower, it would be largely invisible to the collateral citizenry, realization of its presence necessitating military agency. Naming the Void serves in Libeskind as a means of endowing the absence, the nothing, with some sort of substance, a fairly benign effect when actively produced, considerably less benign in the case of the Freedom Tower. The memory flood that follows the perception of the Void as empty creates an urge to memorialization that longs for a something to embrace when greeted with the superficial nothing of the Void and, as a consequence, ends up embracing the solicited but largely unknown inhabitant, the al Qaeda military state.

The point at which this inhabitation takes place is the iconography of the World Trade Center. For al Qaeda, the buildings are characterized as targets, icons of capitalism and infidelity that must be destroyed along with their occupants in a completion of the failed attempt to do so
in 1993. For the U.S., the buildings are characterized as America incarnate, icons of multiculturalism and benevolent globalization (brought about through the eponymous world trade) that must be celebrated and memorialized. The buildings also serve as spiritual pillars, icons of the American dream that must be remembered and rebuilt in a more perfect incarnation. When the maternal homeland withdraws from its initial global form, al Qaeda is drawn closer in the process, allowing it to inhabit the iconography through association; after September 11th, one cannot think of the flag without thinking of those attempting to attack it. The inhabitation occurs in such a way that Daniel Libeskind’s efforts to reinscribe the iconography of the World Trade Center in his Freedom Tower simply inscribe al Qaeda’s presence.

To achieve efficient operation in the globalized sphere of non-state actors, the military state adopts the cellular form. As a non-“state” actor, the military state operates at a sub-“state” level, its mobility requiring the independence, decentralization, and diminished populations that only the cellular may provide. Cellular pathology is not discussed in so many words in Freud, yet a clear theorization of the cell does appear. The germ cell/germ plasm works against the death of the individual to perpetuate the group, living on beyond the temporal limitation of the “terrorist” body and the elimination of one among the community of cells, deliberate or otherwise. Al Qaeda has had to operate at the cellular level out of necessity, as its existence as a non-state actor within the globalized sphere requires mobility as a prerequisite for preservation. However, the U.S. has not, making its adoption of the cellular form as a means of soliciting the triggering event for reformatted globalization awkward due to its inexperience, and revealing its own complicity in so-called “terrorist” actions.

Cellularity is necessitated by the stateless condition of globalization, where the focus on borderless mobility and the military state actor makes citizens collateral to the desires of the cell.
States therefore become bodies without organs, envisioned by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as the limit of capitalism, the pinnacle of the initial effort at creation of a U.S. global state and subsequent reformatted imperial agenda of the U.S. military cell. This body without organs is then set upon by organ machines that, through their attachment to the body, create a multiple gaze that erases the unitary image of the U.S. nation-“state” in favor of a ruptured realm of varying perspectives. It is this rupture that the U.S. military cell attempts to fill through the solicited reformatted imperialist venture. At the same time, it is only through this willful vulnerability to organ machines that the U.S. military cell may adopt the cellular form necessary to solicit the event, making the fantasy of its salvation its actual downfall.
Introduction

We are traditionally sensitive to the threat which the ‘forces of evil’ pose for the Good, whereas it is the threat posed by the forces of Good which is the fateful threat to the world of the future.

-Baudrillard, Impossible Exchange

September 11, 2001 is much misunderstood by the public at large, as well as a number of contemporary critical theorists. The public’s immediate and subsequent involvement in the mediatized, politicized, and globalized symbolic realm obscures analysis beneath a veneer of reactionary nationalist and Leftist ideologies that do little other than reinscribe the very difficulties that produced the event. This tendency to obscure the event proves the crux of the analytical gap, a set of geopolitical maneuverings and missteps that operate in specific and calculated ways to produce September 11 not as an unexpected, unwanted event working to the detriment of U.S. ideology, but rather as an inevitable, solicited event working to the detriment of U.S. ideology. The U.S. ideology merely conceals the true national raison d’être, military neo-imperialism.

To that end, the difficulties take on a fittingly tripartite Oedipal form, where the maternal homeland is compromised by the solicited event, though not by the U.S. military son of that mother and the Founding Fathers. One would expect that the son would try to eliminate his father to gain access to the mother, as is typical of the Oedipus complex. In the case of a U.S.-centered world, one would expect that the U.S. military son would try to eliminate his Founding Father to gain access to the maternal homeland. Rather, it is the globalized son, al Qaeda, who compromises the mother, displacing the U.S. military son as the Oedipal agent and installing al
Qaeda as a new father invulnerable to the U.S. military son through an increasingly specialized progression from Oedipal homeland, to Oedipal architecture, to Oedipal cellularity.

The Oedipal homeland is compromised by globalization and the solicited event, as globalization erases the distinction between internal and external that allows an event to be solicited from an external actor. Unhappy with its initial attempt at globalization, the U.S. nation-“state” requires a mobile force beneath its lofty and entirely fictive ideologies, birthing the U.S. military state as its true global actor. The ultimate goal of the U.S. military state is to reformat the global enterprise on terms more favorable to the state. Accordingly, the U.S. military state practices aggressive victimhood, soliciting a controlled victimizing event from the al Qaeda military state so as to realize its reformatting agenda, allowing a controlled permeation of the maternal homeland but leaving the father unharmed. However, as an actor in the globalized world, the al Qaeda military state is always already inside the maternal homeland, making its solicited event exempt from the approved channel of external aggression within aggressive victimhood. Ultimately, the internal presence of the al Qaeda military state excludes the U.S. military state son from an Oedipal action that eliminates the Founding Fathers through exposure of the fictive nature of their ideologies, compromises the maternal homeland by seizing control of the solicited event, and turns that event to its own advantage, becoming the untouchable father over the U.S. military state son.

After the uncontrolled solicited event comes to pass, the U.S. nation-“state” retracts from its globalized form down to the level of the universal city, and within the universal city to the World Trade Center itself, producing a site for ideological reinscription that also falls prey to the erasure of the distinction between internal and external. Before the event, the World Trade Center exists as at once a lightning rod for U.S. nation-“state” ideologies of peace, equality, and
the free market, while also exemplifying the closed dualism of pseudo-discourse and the sarcophagus in its expired ideologies. Already inscribed in the towers is the al Qaeda military state, its inhabitation of U.S. nation-“state” iconography becoming evident in the ruptures of the attack, which reveal the presence of the al Qaeda military state prior to, during, and after the event. Daniel Libeskind, at the behest of the U.S. military state, plans an ambitious rebuilding project for the World Trade Center site that reinscribes the fictive ideologies of the U.S. nation-state” in more unilateral terms. In its ignorance of the ongoing inhabitation of September 11 imagery and national iconography through involvement in the event, the U.S. military state memorializes not the event as solicited and characterized in approved historicizations, but rather the event as performed by the al Qaeda military state, an Oedipal failure for the U.S. military state.

Once both the universal city and the reinscribed World Trade Center fail, the nature of the al Qaeda military state becomes evident to the U.S. military state, who performs an ongoing and flawed adoption of cellular methodologies (as seen in the Central American interventions of the 1980s) that only serves to further expose the global abuses of the U.S. military state. Cellularity grants a degree of mobility unavailable to the territorialized nation-“state,” and is the only successful form of military agency in the globalized world, as demonstrated by the accomplishments of the al Qaeda military state. Rather than understanding the methodologies of the al Qaeda military state and the inhabitation of the maternal homeland and Oedipal triad they facilitate, the U.S. military state instead operates on a limited understanding of cellularity, stigmatizing and medicalizing it before realizing its true usefulness for covert, highly mobile military applications. Its usefulness revealed, the U.S. military state solicits the cellular event from the al Qaeda military cell, unaware of the fact that its cellular concession will reveal the
U.S. military cell as no better than the “terrorists” it has critiqued for so long. The cellular concession also exposes the cell’s misdeeds to a broader global audience and, more importantly, its own citizens, collateralized by their forced non-participation in events. This is a fundamental misunderstanding on the part of the U.S. military cell, illustrating that it is just as fundamentalist as al Qaeda.

Before beginning the discussion of fundamentalism, a brief review of popular and critical perceptions of September 11 is necessary to contextualize the argument that follows. Popular opinion, at least within the U.S., contends that September 11 was an act of “terrorism” most vile, a case of a group of deranged, religiously-crazed individuals taking out their aggression upon a wholly innocent U.S. These men were motivated by a hatred of the freedoms guaranteed by the U.S.; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, all of which are absent in the backward theocracies from which the “terrorists” originate. Accordingly, the U.S. is a clear victim, and those who acted to save lives, at the emergency response level and at the governmental level, are unqualified heroes with only the best interests of the nation in mind. As the U.S. is characterized by its strength and global benevolence, a military response is in order to root out the evildoers and make the world safe for democracy, the unimpeachably ideal form of government. Dissent against this position is akin to sympathizing with the “terrorists,” and makes one subject to the edicts of the USA PATRIOT Act; essentially, if someone has nothing to fear, then they will not mind if the government snoops around a bit. This is the party line held by George W. Bush and believed by most of the U.S. and even some of the world, though the issue is more complex than this simplified narrative implies.

Critical perception of September 11 perceives this level of complexity, though it is far from uniformly valuable. Most critics call into question the claim of the U.S. as a victim, and
some even begin to question the role of the U.S. in actively bringing the event upon itself. Of the many theorists who have addressed the event, only two, Jean Baudrillard and Slavoj Žižek, come close to perceiving the full depth of the event. Baudrillard offers an abbreviated look at the U.S.-as-soliciting agent of September 11 in his *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays* (2003), focusing primarily on the idea of exchange. For Baudrillard, “terrorism” is not simply a phenomenon of the non-West, but of the West as well, though Western insistence on a scheme of Manichean good and evil obscures the impossible exchange of hijacker suicides for military response. In addition to his nascent conceptualization of the U.S.-as-soliciting agent, where “it [the U.S.] was party to its own destruction,” Baudrillard also discusses the closed dualism of the World Trade Center itself, updating his work from *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976) in a manner that begins an architectural analysis of the event, but does not complete it (2002, 7).

Žižek offers a similarly abbreviated look at the manipulation of September 11 imagery in the realm of the Real in his *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates* (2002), positing the attack as a return from the hyperreal to the real. For Žižek, the daily presence of the Real (a real that is more real than real) makes September 11 seem incomprehensible, though the event actually represents the return of the real to the realm of the Real in symbolic form, beginning an analysis of image management of the event that unfortunately remains unfinished. In contrast to these theorists, whose work is useful albeit incomplete, my argument seeks to complete their work on solicitation, architecture, and image management, synthesizing their partial perspectives into a larger whole that will respond to the prevailing popular conception with a resounding “NO.”
I. Universals

When beginning a discussion of fundamentalism, one must first establish, for lack of a better word, the fundamentals, the universal assumptions upon which all fundamentalisms operate. Here, a tribal formation is just such a universal, notable both for who it excludes (women) and for what it hypocritically includes (the pseudo-non-penetrative U.S.). In his discussion of Carvaggio’s “The Sacrifice of Isaac” in “The Names-of-the-Father Seminar” (Seminar VII), Jacques Lacan notes the tribal preference within the fundamentalist sphere where “El Shadday [the almighty] decamps with the tribes that brought him along for the attack” after observing the effectiveness of another tribe in repelling an invasive force (2001, 113). As the Almighty aligns itself with a given tribe, it is tribal; as the Almighty selects this tribe on the basis of its viability, it is mobile. This passage illustrates not only the divine preference for tribal formations, but also a similarly divine opportunism that, in opposition to binding election (to be discussed below), God is mobile, choosing the tribal form for its inherent mobility. Fundamentalism is therefore a two-way street of sorts, the tribes revering God for its power and God revering the tribes for their mobility and relative invisibility, a clear impossibility for an all-encompassing deity. Though all-inclusive, and embracing the multiplicitous tribal form, the fundamentalist God is not so welcoming when it comes to women, a problem that will receive an extended treatment in Chapter One.

The al Qaeda formation of fundamentalist Islam establishes a trajectory beginning in a period of corrupted belief which, due to its severity, may only be alleviated by jihad. Sayyid Qutb anatomizes this process in his text Milestones, where he identifies the corrupted belief at the fundamentalist origin as “Jahiliyyah [which] is based on rebellion against God’s sovereignty on earth… [and] transfers to man one of the greatest attributes of God, namely sovereignty, and
makes some men lords over others,” a perversion of the perceived order of things (1981, 11). Qutb’s jahiliyya is in fact a more severe version of pre-fundamentalist jahiliyya in Islamic discourse, acting not simply as “foreign ideas and conventions that [distort] or [deny] the rule of God… [but rather] a moral corruption that [is] not limited to a specific place or time but that [has] darkened all places and all times since the eclipse of Muhammad’s ideal community of Muslims in mid-seventh century Arabia” (Benjamin and Simon 2003, 64). This distinction also introduces the favored goal of Islamic fundamentalist action, the return to “the golden age: one God, one prophet, one scripture, one people, and one ruler” as it existed under the Caliphate in the period immediately following Muhammad (46).

Given the severity of the state of jahiliyya, the Caliphate may only return via the institution of military action against those corrupting the believers, be they Muslim or otherwise, in the form of jihad. This jihad must be undertaken with a very specific purpose: “to establish God’s authority on the earth; to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by God; to abolish all the Satanic forces and Satanic systems of life; to end the lordship of one man over others, since all men are creatures of God and no one has the authority to make them his servants or to make arbitrary laws for them” (Qutb 2001, 65). Action is a prerequisite to belief, as evidenced by hijacker Mohamed Atta’s ridicule of Christianity: “What do you people do for your God? You don’t do anything for him” (quoted in Hopsicker 2004, 152). The ultimate aim of such action is not only the restoration of the Caliphate and the reordered sovereignty it implies, which “alone is ‘human civilization,’ as the basis of a human civilization is the complete and true freedom of every person and the full dignity of every individual of the society” but also the more specific sovereignty of the Islamic world from jahiliyya, which characteristically does not extend to all (Qutb 1981, 94).
Al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist sovereignty follows the strict letter of the law under the Caliphate, the *shari-ah* which establishes a brotherhood as the primary ideological agent in a manner reminiscent of the general fundamentalist universals in its deliberate exclusion of women. Mohamed Atta, as an adherent of fundamentalist Islam, treats women poorly, telling one neighbor in his Venice, Florida apartment complex that “I don’t talk to women and you’re supposed to look down when you talk to me,” thereby demonstrating the place of women within the Islamic fundamentalist schema (quoted in Hopsicker 2004, 62). Treatment of women will become more important in the discussion of the maternal homeland in Chapter One. Such placement is clearly codified in the *shari’ah*, the legal code of the Caliphate, “a necessity for human beings so that their lives may become harmonious and in tune with the rest of the universe; not only this, but the only way in which harmony can be brought about between the physical laws which are operative in the biological life of a man and the moral laws which govern his voluntary actions is solely through obedience to the *Shari’ah*” (Qutb 1981, 89). Such logic creates justification for women’s disenfranchisement within the divine and scientific realms. This singular focus finds a similar singularity in the unitary statement “*La ilaha illa Allah*,” translated as “there is no God but Allah” (35). This creates a male God as the central focus of the fundamentalist faith, a movement that fulfills all of the general universal fundamentalist requirements but one: the tribal formation.

After the initial tribalization of the believers from the *jahili* world and the men from the women, Islamic fundamentalist males, under the leadership of Hasan al-Banna, founded the Muslim Brotherhood. Their founding manifesto outlines the objective of the fraternal organization in concise terms: “God is our purpose, the Prophet our leader, the Koran our constitution, Jihad our way and dying for God’s cause our supreme objective” (quoted in Ali...
What results from the final tribalization of Islamic fundamentalist males in the Brotherhood is a divine totalitarian formation acting in the direction of, in the name of, and for the glory of God who, as a fellow male and tribal admirer, has selected the group as his earthly emissaries. This selection is made to the exclusion of women and the non-believers of the jahili world, creating a force whose purported divine selection endows their actions with considerable vigor, a vigor only matched by their Christian fundamentalist counterparts.

As the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation acts in a totalitarian fashion, so too does the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, hiding a strict adherence to the Manichean allegory of good and evil beneath a veneer of universal values. Wahhabist Islam, perhaps the most overtly fundamentalist version of the faith now practiced and centered primarily in Saudi Arabia, requires a strict profession of faith from its adherents, a profession solicited “in a manner not unlike the practices of born-again Christian fundamentalists” (Unger 2004, 85). Michael Parenti similarly notes the totalitarian past and present of Christianity, where “the Jesus proselytes proceeded to burn all the many fine pagan libraries that existed, and destroyed forever the corpus of pagan works in philosophy, literature, history, astronomy, science, and the arts, ushering in more than a thousand oppressive years of ignorant and intolerant theocracy” (2004, 60). This totalitarian ethic is mimicked in a contemporary call for action from “Operation Rescue” founder Randall Terry: “We have a Biblical duty; we are called by God to conquer this country. We don’t want equal time. We don’t want pluralism” (quoted in 2004, 60). Though the above evidence paints a picture of intolerance and divinely inspired action as per strict dictates, the language of freedom and liberty dominates the speeches of George W. Bush, including “‘freedom-loving,’ ‘free market,’ ‘free trade,’ and ‘enemies of liberty’” (Domke 2004, 95). What results is a linguistic ethos that, while seeming to endorse an additional universal that
actually negates the male focus of the general universals, implies a subtle Manichean approach. Charles Pellegrino, author of *Ghosts of Vesuvius: A New Look at the Last Days of Pompeii, How Towers Fall, and Other Strange Connections*, exemplifies this Manichean reliance in his refusal, when confronted with the uncertainty of “terrorism,” “to believe that the evil ones so outnumber the good. I’ve got to believe that most people are basically good. I’ve got to. If not, then there is no hope” (2004, 453). This insistence on good and evil finds a parallel in George W. Bush’s belief that “there was no place in heaven for anyone who did not accept Jesus Christ as personal savior” (Hatfield 2001, 453). Universals thus act as the foundation of fundamentalism, and a clear understanding of the trajectory of tribal formation, preceding corruption, and military action allows a deeper insight into the workings of the fundamentalist entity that may permit certain predictive abilities. In both the Islamic and Christian fundamentalist cases, the notion of election, of being chosen for a divine mission, validates all universals before and all that comes after.

**Election**

The notion of election, of having been divinely chosen for a specific mission, is also endemic to fundamentalist formations, though the differing natures of election for the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation and the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation render the notion just short of universal status. For the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, in relation to September 11, 2001, the first appearance of the notion of election is actually external to the formation itself, occurring with the U.S. preference “to see itself struck down by God than by some evil power. ‘God bless America’ has become: ‘At last, God has struck us’” (Baudrillard 2003, 60). Election operates dually in Baudrillard’s statement, the U.S. believing itself to have been selected as a target by no less than God, while also endowing the al Qaeda hijacker-as-
perpetrator, not God, with divine weight. Deleuze and Guattari perform a similar operation in the statement that “[i]llness is considered a sign of an election, of a special attention coming from supernatural powers,” as drawn from M.C. and Edmund Ortigues (quoted in 1992, 170). Illness is marker, a means of (s)election both positive and negative, as it allows for the distinguishing of difference which facilitates identification among, but also against, a given group. Deleuze and Guattari not only endow the illness, the cellular perpetrating agent, with a sort of supernatural essence suggesting divinity, but also introduce the idea of the hijacker-as-illness, to be discussed in Chapter Three.

Thus elected from without, the al Qaeda hijackers are also elected from within, where nominees “who accepted suicide missions, they were the true elite among the faithful, members of ‘God’s Brigade’” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 262). The resulting election merges internal favor with God’s universal tribal preference. Once elected, the fundamentalist formation achieves spiritual progress, “[a]ll such progress in spirituality result[ing] in increasing self-confidence, in making people proud so that they feel superior to those who have remained in the bondage of the senses.” (Freud 1947, 181) This progress is then compounded by the larger “confidence of a man who knows that he is with the truth, while what the people have is falsehood,” (Qutb 1981, 133) resulting in a confidence bordering on arrogance. Therefore, the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation actually receives its election primarily from without, a more literal (though not divine) election than that of the U.S. Lacking the assumed perspective of external analysis, the U.S. must elect itself from within not as a means of maintaining global hegemony, but rather of regaining its hold on the world.

Where the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation is elected from without when solicited by the U.S., the U.S. is without election, necessitating an election from within that
results in the establishment of a proxy God in the person of the president in its solicitation of the divine act. Though “Manifest Destiny”\textsuperscript{10} dictates a vision of the U.S. as elect, its genocidal applications (most notably, the case of the Native Americans) reveal it to be less a divine election than an expedient self-election. George H.W. Bush outlines the necessity of election for the U.S., and acknowledges a “need to hear and to heed the voice of Almighty God,” thereby codifying the need for divine election to ensure the proper place of the U.S. in the globalized world of its own creation (or, given its eventual perception of election, Creation) (2001, 20).

Bush elaborates on the essential nature of election, saying that “[w]ithout God’s help we can do nothing… [w]ith God’s help there is nothing we cannot do, for our children and for the world” (21). Bush’s statement illustrates a craving for election as a means of gaining true agency in the globalized world, while also hinting at the notion of parental lineage within the process of election, as well as a feeling of stewardship over the U.S.-globalized world, blinded but now able to see (and be seen, by the pseudo-panoptic U.S. surveillance state) by the divine light of election.

In the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, it is not even the tribal unit, itself a division of the larger corpus of believers, but the individual who is the locus of election, a phenomenon that does not escape the grasp of George H.W. Bush: “I have been honored to serve as President of this great nation for two years now and believe more than ever that one cannot be America’s President without trust in God” (134). As the President is the necessary recipient of a divine election by the Heavenly Father, he may pass that divine paternal favor to his son, though in receiving the same divine favor from the same deity, George W. is on the same level as George H.W. The emphasis on the president as the locus of election creates a dual form of election, not only of the president-as-tribal focus, but also of the president-as-father to the
president-as-son, an application of the generational stewardship implied above that creates George W. Bush as the elected locus of election (though not truly elected, at least not in 2000). Stanley Renshon perceives this shift, saying that Bush, “like the Old Testament prophets, must rally his people,” (2004, 150) establishing George W. Bush as a modern prophet, a Jesus to George H.W. Bush’s God. Election also takes on a uniquely territorial aspect in the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation since, as the globalizing agent of the world, the U.S. is specifically territorially-minded and, as the sole (ideological and military) possessor of land, is the only formation capable of establishing itself as a territorial beacon, a “city on a hill.” This city is visible to the rest of the world as a divine example of not only the correct path as decried by the deity, but the correct fundamentalist formation as well.

A “City on a Hill”

Given its status as a (self-) elected agent of God, the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, uniquely endowed with a territorial proclivity due to its ideological and economic globalization of the world, establishes a tribal subset of that globalized world, a universal city that acts as a beacon unto the world. Lacan discusses the unique American methodology in the course of examining desire, identifying “the subject [with] access to them all, to follow the ‘American way’” (1992, 219). Lacan is referring to the unilaternal tendency of the U.S., the Christian fundamentalist formation who, by virtue of its (self-) elect status, may make use of its tribal mobility to enter and exit the globalized world as it pleases. However, in its capacity as (self-) elect, the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation deems it necessary to create and maintain a beacon so as to perpetuate its own (self-) election through the recognition of the world at large. Once more, it is George H.W. Bush who identifies the divine mission of the U.S., concluding that “[t]he glory of this century is America… [t]his is our legacy… [t]his is our
challenge…[a]nd this is our destiny,” pointing to the divine status of the U.S. while also calling for its necessary perpetuation (2001, 221). Bush also implies that such perpetuation is required for the betterment of the globalized world.

It is not only George H.W. Bush and not only the field of politics who register the necessity of perceived U.S. greatness, but also Daniel Libeskind and the field of architecture. Libeskind’s desire to “make a site for the greatest memorial the world has ever seen” calls for the reinvigoration of a New York City devastated by September 11, thereby creating New York City as the universal city, the “city on a hill”\(^{12}\) and the focal point of U.S. event solicitation (see Chapter One) (quoted in Goldberger 2004, 169). Before the city may be placed upon the hill, one vital condition must be fulfilled, as noted by George H.W. Bush: “an endlessly renewed dedication to keeping our great country strong, our defenses second to none, our leadership unquestioned and unchallenged” (2001, 239). For the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation to produce and maintain the city, it must be able to manifest its power invisibly and therefore beyond the realm of examination, necessitating the mobility that only the tribal formation can produce. Seemingly, at least in the eyes of the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, the “city on a hill” is a success, though closer examination yields the city as the flawed result of an oblivious U.S. formation.

Despite its best efforts to create a locus of unexamined power in the “city on a hill,” the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation is guilty of underexamination regarding its own elect status. The formation obliviously ignores the fact of its self-election and its limited field of expertise (economics and military force) in favor of a fictive relationship of divine reciprocity. Pellegrino offers an apt metaphor for the sheer obliviousness of the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation in his discussion of the “shock cocoon” evident in the collapse of the
World Trade Center (2004, 390). Through the vagaries of physics, a single portion of Stairwell B in the North Tower survived the chaos all around it, much as the mythic “city on a hill” and its producing U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation remain intact despite the realities of the globalized world. Within this mythic formation is the reality, as noted by Parenti, that the superiority of the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation is limited at best: “What then is the United States Number One in? As best I can tell, it comes down to two things: wealth and military might” (2004, 25). Fortunately for the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, its hold on the globalized world is predicated on economic and ideological dominance and the occasional military correction of an unruly entity, so its power remains largely unexamined, that is until these capabilities are decentralized.

Even while centralized, prior to the perfection of and improvement upon military methodologies by the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation’s methodologies approximate those of al Qaeda in their early, Revolutionary War era manifestations. Former CIA Director Willam Casey calls this methodology “irregular partisan guerrilla warfare” in reference to the U.S. victory in 1776 (quoted in Unger 2004, 98). Given the myth-shattering form of Parenti’s and Casey’s revelations, as well as Pellegrino’s framing metaphor, one would expect some recognition of the fictive nature of the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation and its “city on a hill.” However, George H.W. Bush is unmoved, reasserting the (self-) election of the U.S. and also identifying the (self-) election as a reciprocal agreement: “I believe that America will always have a special place in God’s heart, as long as he has a special place in ours” (2001, 202). So, as long as the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation keeps its eyes on God, and not on the flawed “city on a hill,” (self-) election will continue. The “city on a hill” is thus a product of (self-) election, the
material manifestation of a deity’s favor whose divine import puts it beyond the realm of questioning. Oddly enough, this underexamination meets its equal in the textual overexamination endemic to both the al Qaeda and U.S. Christian fundamentalist formations, though in divergent forms.

**The Text and Language**

Preference for the holy text is another universal characteristic of fundamentalist formations, the text (or rather holy text) being the original source of fundamentalist ideology. For the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, the holy text exists as the central location of ideological structures, such as the *shari’ah*, and ideological expression, such as *jihad*, and therefore as the foundation of fundamentalist Muslim society. Terry McDermott discusses the relative formlessness of the fundamentalist formation, concluding that “there is very little real structure to it at all, little hierarchy and no absolute arbiters or authority… [g]uidance is contained in the core texts and the interpretations of these texts by historical figures” (2005, 3). McDermott offers a vision of the fundamentalist formation wherein the text is not a primary structural element, but rather the only structural element. For Sayyid Qutb, the centrality of the text, in his case the Qur’an, implies a similar centralization of the action suggested therein, asserting that “[i]f they [the first generation after Muhammad] had read the Qur’an only for the sake of discussion, learning and information, the doors [to spiritual fulfillment and knowledge] would not have opened” (1981, 18). Now, action, already central to the text, is rendered doubly so in its status as a formational structure.

It is not only Qutb who is a textual literalist, but also his ideological disciple, Mohamed Atta who “insisted that it had been right to declare him [Abu Zaid, professor of Arabic at Cairo University] an apostate [for his liberal views on Islam]… [t]he Qur’an was the word of God…”
“it must be taken as is” (quoted in Ruthven 2002, 41). Both Qutb and Atta are textual literalists of a sort, insisting on the primacy of the text as the only true artifact of Islam, though another element of Qutb’s critical style alters this view somewhat. Rather than insisting on the digestion of the Qur’an as a whole document, “[i]n the hands of his less sophisticated disciples, however, his ‘soldiers on the battlefield,’ the text would become an operational manual, a seventh-century time bomb loaded with menace” (89). In essence, Qutb’s approach opens the text not only to differing functionalities as both a spiritually and technically prescriptive entity, but also opens the field of the text entirely to include other texts, as Simon Reeve notes: “[The head of Islamic Jihad] Shiqaqi, a Palestinian, read Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex at least ten times in English translation and claimed to have wept ‘bitterly’ each time” (1999, 118). Reeve’s observation not only reads as a broadening of the textual base of the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, but also a consultation of the terms of the Oedipal homeland (to be discussed in Chapter One), and implies a relative textual malleability taken to extremes in the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation’s conversion to the verbal text. Shiqaqi’s awareness of Oedipus Rex points to a larger awareness, and perhaps even fluency, in the terms of the story of Oedipus, if not the complex, among the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation. With such knowledge, the formation’s engagement in Oedipal actions may then be viewed with some degree of self-knowledge.

The use of language within the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation suggests a verbalization of the holy text, the Bible, a perhaps more mediatized version of the text that enables its dissemination through and use as a weapon in the mass media counterpart to the globalized world on the symbolic level. When insisting on the fact that September 11 could not have been prevented, George W. Bush illustrates the verbalized holy text in action, saying that “[h]ad I any inkling whatsoever that the people were going to fly airplanes into buildings, we
would have moved heaven and earth to save the country” (quoted in Thompson 2004, 58).

Bush’s statement uses the Manichean implication of his divisive heaven to imply the (self-) elect status of the U.S., while also granting himself hyperbolically supernatural strength in the movement metaphor. Again, it is not only George W. Bush who uses such language, but also Daniel Libeskind, who issues a more direct, if unknowing, call for divine intervention in his Freedom Tower, ending a presentation by calling it “a global symbol of optimism. God bless America” (quoted in Goldberger 2004, 200). The final statement acts as a request for the fulfillment of George H.W. Bush’s relationship of reciprocity with God and as evidence of the fundamentalist leanings of the U.S. at large. Here, the Freedom Tower exists as a microcosm of the U.S. maternal homeland, making Libeskind’s invocation a doubled blessing for his building and the milieu in which it resides.

The verbalization of the holy text extends not only to the response to September 11, but also to U.S. iconography that predates and is involved in the event, in this case Air Force One, a supposed target of the attack via a “threat… allegedly based on the use of the word ‘Angel,’ the code word for Air Force One” (Thompson 2004, 492). Air Force One’s name suggests divine guidance over its presidential contents. By associating the verbalized holy text with the plane, already rendered a machine of war prior to and on September 11, the text becomes a kind of weapon best described by Stephen Mansfield: “[Bush] was making language part of the national arsenal, learning the power of a president to impart the moral sense to a nation in crisis” (2003, 136). Such military mechanization of language through its previous verbalization of the holy text and subsequent dissemination through globalized mass media allows the president himself to become a text, verbalizing the prescriptions of the holy text. With its preemption of the text in favor of the approved interpretation, Bush’s manner of presentation invokes a sense of
megalomaniacal self-importance in the interpreter, a megalomania that nears authoritarian levels of control over other fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist formations. His self-election as final interpreter mimics the self-election of the U.S., illustrating the degree to which Bush considers himself (and only himself) as the agent of U.S. election. Language thus acts as a means of enacting textual literalism in the holy book, then extending it to multiple texts and multiple readings of those texts, as well as to the linguistic pronouncements of the fundamentalist formations based on those multiplicities.

II. Megalomania

Megalomania, resulting from libidinal retraction into the self and the associated narcissism of that action, dominates the fundamentalist formation. This megalomania produces a strange oscillation from singularity to collectivity that preserves the tribal universal of the fundamentalist formation by subjecting it to the machinations of fascism, as is true of both the al Qaeda and U.S. formations. For the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, the initial moment of fascist resemblance appears in the fascination of the individual characteristic of megalomania, and compounded by the individual-as-suicide. In “On Narcissism: An Introduction,” Freud identifies not only a lauding, but also a solicitation of the individual, noting “withdrawn… interest from the external world (people and things)” (1957, 105). This withdrawal into the individual, internal space of narcissism is a prerequisite for the megalomania necessary for the functioning of the fundamentalist formation. Freud’s retraction into the ideological sphere produces the individual-as-great man, doctrinaire to the point of non-concern with the world at large. The individual is therefore subject to individualized fascination from without, as well as an almost narcissistic attention to individual development within, as seen in the case of Mohamed Atta. Atta is solicited as such a great man by his father, who advises
young Atta to focus on self-improvement in “Portrait of a Terrorist: Mohamed Atta” (Coombes and O’Connor 2002). Thus, Atta’s internal focus, brought about in part by the urging of his father, creates in him the narcissistic self-fascination and concern with personal legacy (self-as-heroic-ideal) necessary to produce him as a “great man.”

With the authoritarian “great man” comes a series of delusions of grandeur, in the prototypical Nazi example the notion of a master race, a notion not far removed from Atta’s al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation vision of an end to jahiliyya. These delusions of grandeur are illustrated in Atta’s growing sense of self-importance in the course of his time in Florida prior to September 11, where his fellow hijacker and flight trainee Marwan al Shehhi, the likely pilot of Flight 175, “was in fact [Atta’s] bodyguard” (Hopsicker 2004, 61). The use of al Shehhi as a bodyguard, at least in the cover story where Atta is a Saudi prince (another delusion of grandeur), exemplifies his megalomania, since even as point man for the plot, Atta is not of significantly greater importance to the hijackers than al Shehhi, also a pilot. Only his authoritative age (Atta as the eldest member of the group) and Egyptian background (to be discussed in Chapter One) aid his case. Much like the authoritarian stereotype, Atta too has a redemptive plan, claiming that bin Laden “would someday be known as the world’s greatest leader” through his actions (quoted in Thompson 2004, 190). Atta’s ambition indicates a nearly narcissistic focus on his own agenda, which he carries out by force in a typically fascistic fashion. Also, the production of great men by Atta’s action (both Atta and bin Laden) resembles the creation of the authoritarian leader-as-supreme individual. The combination of ambition and production illustrates both an internalized (self-production as a great man) and externalized (self-destruction as a master plan) megalomania, a dualistic megalomania quite similar to that practiced by the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation.
Where the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation proceeds from a position of genuine ruin as the origin of its fascist megalomania, the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation hallucinates its own ruin, then singles out George W. Bush as a redemptive agent. Eric L. Santner addresses the hallucination of ruin, where the individual is the last person left, surrounded by “fleeting-improvised men” (quoted in 1996, 56). As Schreber’s hallucination results in a withdrawal into a fallacious position of singularity and a personal cosmology, so too does the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, similarly placing its own hallucinatory (il)logic within a larger narrative structure. Such hallucination results in a perception of the individual as not only the last remaining person in a field of improvised persons, much like the Jew-as-half-person in the Nazi conception, but also as an agent of redemption for those compromised by the hallucinated ruin. Before such redemption may take place, an event must occur which allows the redemptive agent to actualize their abilities, in the case of George W. Bush “what he called ‘the liberator’ – a major oil find that would cement his future and justify his promise” (Renshon 2004, 30). For the larger project of redeeming (the favored portions of) the world, a more significant liberating event is necessary. The megalomaniacal hallucination, in concert with the concept of aggressive victimhood (to be discussed in Chapter One), allows the individual to assume a posture of victimhood that is formalized in the solicitation of a definitively victimizing event.

Accordingly, as will be discussed below, Bush solicits September 11 through a number of policy decisions, thereby producing not only the liberating event, but also the individual-as-liberator. This individual is able to invade countries in the name of benevolent rule in a manner that recalls not only imperialism, but also fascism and the Nazi annexations taken under a similar mindset. Bush’s insistence on redemption rises out of personal experience with relative ruin,
specifically his experiences in a 1978 run for Congress in Texas where, after his opponent capitalizes on the issue of alcohol to gain victory, Bush sees it as “a harsh introduction to how religion and politics could mix, and… would remember it well in the years to come” (Mansfield 2003, 55). A lifelong effort to avenge the loss through the use of politicized, redemptive fundamentalism evident in the solicitation of September 11 is foreshadowed in this experience. This unflinching, almost maniacal focus on the failure of 1978 as a perpetual black mark on his career haunts George W. Bush. Though Bush enacts “a focus on one thing at a time in a longer list, not just one thing period,” the list contains only repetitions of the offending moment and renders his redemptive efforts essentially unitary in their repetitious focus on the failure of 1978 (Renshon 2004, 81). Like those of the prototypical Nazis, Bush’s redemptive efforts are simply failures to erase a past event which will always exist. As Bush attempts to erase his own failure in the 1978 election, so too do the Nazis attempt to erase the crippling aftermath of their failure in World War I. Repetition plays an important role in the megalomaniacal redemptive project, as the redemptive act is typically aimed at the erasure or recontextualization of a past failure. This is true of both the genuinely ruined al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation and the hallucinatory ruin of the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation.

As the wound necessitating the redemptive action is perpetual, the redemptive event must be repeated, though each time its repetition comes earlier, yielding redemption as a machine of sorts in the mechanistic precision of the redemptive action. The very notion of redemption carries with it a sense of delusive grandeur, of the individual-as-savior, also found in megalomania, making the repetitions megalomaniacal in content if not form. Jonathan Safran Foer captures the essence of this repetition, discussing the repeated images of the World Trade Center collapse, “the same images over and over, as if the world itself were repeating,” and
grasping the larger intent of the assorted repetitions (2005, 272). Each repetition is a crude effort to restart the world, this time in favor of the redemptive agent. Redemption is in this sense not so much an action concerned with either the greater effort to redeem the world or the individual from some apocalyptic ruin, but rather not a redemption at all – actually, a preemption. For an event to be solicited, it must be sought prior to its desired occurrence and, since September 11 is a solicited event for both the al Qaeda Islamic and U.S. Christian fundamentalist formations, it is a preemptive effort, the penultimate preemption of many for both actors.

Al Qaeda has engaged in prior repetitions in 1993 (the most obvious, as it targeted the World Trade Center), as well as 1996 (Khobar Towers), 1998 (the embassy bombings), and 2000 (the *U.S.S. Cole*), and the U.S. has engaged in prior repetitions too numerous to count in its support of Israel, as well as interventions in Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq. After all, as George W. Bush says, “[I]late is rude,” necessitating preemption as a matter of politeness alone, if not also tactical advantage (1999, 27). The relative frequency of these repetitions, as well as their methodological uniformity, establishes a mechanistic precision of redemptive action that recalls and ultimately constructs a machine of repetition. Deleuze and Guattari call this “the despotic machine… whose locus is the desert, imposing the harshest and the most barren of ordeals, and attesting to the resistance of an old order as well as the validation of the new order” (1992, 192-3). Located in the desert, here the Middle East, the despotic machine attests to the resistance of the global old guard, the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, as well as the newly effective new guard, the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation. The machine suggests the impossibility of penetration in a globally subsumed world, and also complicates the fascist notion of singularity with a brief, and ultimately fleeting, moment of collectivity. Megalomania
thus acts as the ideological form taken by fundamentalism in the course of the redemptive action, the delusion of grandeur granting the individual the power of salvation in a hallucinatory fashion.

**Thwarting Singularity**

Megalomania and its fascist manifestation imply a certain singularity in the phenomenon of the “great man,” a singularity that disappears briefly in the early stages of mythic globalization, then reappears in a more effective, proliferating form thereafter in its repeated emergence. Freud locates the desire to determine one’s own death in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, saying that “[w]hat we are left with is the fact that the organism wishes to die only in its own fashion” (1962, 39). This statement recalls the suicidal self-determinism of the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, as well as the more general tendency, within formations, to preserve and control the singularity. However, globalization problematizes the persistence of the singularity, its ultimate goal being the homogenization of the world in favor of limited economic hegemony, and its sworn enemy being the singularity with a proclivity towards unapproved action. Baudrillard notes that “[w]hat can thwart the system [of globalization] is not positive alternatives, but singularities… [b]ut these are neither positive nor negative” (2003, 96).

Baudrillard illustrates the unique capacity of the singularity to topple the briefly obscuring collectivity, and also the neutrality of the redemptive action. The redemptive action operates not with a specific, intentional neutrality, but rather an absence of a specific orientation inherent to redemption itself; no matter its ultimate result, the redemptive act is enough; to be saved is sufficient, no matter what the from and for may be.

The singularity, at least in its original form, is not exempt from the dangers of globalization, since “[w]hen a singularity throws its own death into the ring, it escapes this slow extermination [of globalization], it dies its own natural death” (Baudrillard 2003, 65). This is
not, however, a binding and final death; rather, after a brief subsumation into the globalized sphere, the suicidal act containing (much like the post-impact, pre-explosion arrival of the airliners at the World Trade Center) a brief moment of silence, the singularity reappears and repeats its presence in an explosive manner. Deleuze and Guattari capture the nature of this repetition, using a spore metaphor to describe the return which, “like a spore case inflated with spores, releases them as so many singularities that he [sic] had improperly shut off” (1992, 77). Such singular action amid the pluralized global sphere also references the singular-as-infection trope used to great effect by the globalizing agent, as shown in Chapter Three. Singularity too falls under the purview of repetition, its disappearance and return allowing an instantaneous reformatting that, in the brief moment of September 11, exemplifies the fault of repetition, its tendency to become a compulsive enterprise.

**Repetition Compulsion**

Though repetition initially acts as an oppositional space for the maintenance of individualities in the globalized sphere, its tendency to become a compulsive action obscures the processes of memory, either purely evading memory altogether (for the repeating agent) or stirring older memories into a more present status (for the repeated non-agent). Freud observes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that the repeating agent “is obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see, *remembering* it as something belonging to the past” (1962, 18). Freud’s statement applies not only to the repeated action as a repressed entity (for the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, the response to the Crusades and Israel, for the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, the more general aggressive military action contrary to state ideology), but also the detemporalization inherent to repetition. Each cycle acts as a static rewind that collapses the
present and future into the past, as each are mere cycles yet to be encountered. However, this detemporalization also draws the past into the present (as the present is the past), reactivating memories not in the form of evasive repression-as-repetition, but rather as returned memories. Again, Freud addresses the issue of repetition, this time not as a rebuke, but rather a return of memory: “The awakening, however, of the memory trace through a recent real repetition of the event is certainly of decisive importance” (1947, 160). As a repetition of the 1993 bombing, September 11 is a recent real repetition, awakening not only the memories of 1993 or, in a fallacious parallel, Pearl Harbor in 1941, but also more enduring memories of past wounds. Benjamin and Simon describe it as a “belief that all events, no matter how long ago, have moral meaning and urgency, that six-hundred-year-old wrongs can somehow be righted… the mark of a mind that believes God is near, insistent upon action, and ready to intervene” (2003, 160). Essentially, these memories center on the fundamentalist formations and their respective master wounds (for al Qaeda, the Crusades, Israel, and U.S. actions, for the U.S., Bush’s 1978 loss and the larger compromise of the globalized world).

The wrongs may be righted by the solicited event, actively sought so as to facilitate the pursuit of preexisting agendas, and evident in the deliberately provocative U.S. foreign policy decisions regarding interventions abroad. By intervening in Israel and in Iraq, and by establishing a military presence in bases throughout the Middle East, the U.S. actively creates a fertile environment for September 11 style events. Since September 11 is a solicited event, it also willfully engages the return of painful memory traces such as Pearl Harbor (as flawed a parallel as it is), calling on past angers to inflame present rage, what Didier Anzieu describes as the “compulsion to repeat the experiences which reactivate both the envelope of excitation and the envelope of suffering” (1989, 44). Repetition thus obscures and exhumes memory, acting
not only as a means of referencing past events to the benefit of the present, but also as a rite of passage of sorts, a means of making visible what was once hidden.

Where the initial event exists in and of itself, the repeated event bears a generational relationship to its predecessor. Where the predecessor necessarily occurs outside of the control of the repeating agent, the repeated event allows the seizure of agency over the event the second time around, making the event a desired visibility in opposition to its prior existence as an undesired invisibility. In Lacan’s formulation, “[o]nly a rite, an endlessly repeated act, can commemorate this not very memorable encounter [between the dead son and the living father]” (1981, 59). However, the event is not simply a rite, but is a rite of passage, that of the son into the position of the father. It is the father, not the son, who is dead, killed in the repeated event so as to allow the son to seize agency through Oedipal action, replacing the father and thus earning the favor of the mother (though this favor is qualified by the loss implied in the action). The benefit of repetition is this seizure of agency by the son, what Freud describes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as a distinct coming into one’s own: “[F]ar from regretting his [the father’s] absence… he [the son] made it quite clear that he had no desire to be disturbed in his sole possession of his mother” (1962, 16). For George W. Bush, the import is clear; by repeating the event, he may gain the presidential and global agency once held by his father. However, in his case, the removal of the father ends up invigorating George H.W. Bush as an international figure, albeit in a peacekeeping role along with Bill Clinton. The repeated event is therefore not only event specific, allowing the seizure of the event, but also site specific, allowing the seizure of the site of the event in a sort of spatial dethroning of the father in the identical (re)location of the repetition.
Bush similarly appropriates the World Trade Center site shortly after the event, speaking from atop the rubble, returning to the site of his repeated event. Lacan notes that “the real is that which always comes back to the same place – to the place where the subject in so far as he [sic] thinks, where the res cogitans, does not meet it,” pointing to the spatial repetition of the repeated event, like that of the return to the World Trade Center on September 11 after its initial bombing in 1993 (1981, 49). Lacan also references the nearly involuntary nature of the repetition, perhaps a genetic necessity passed from the father to the son, or rather the erasure of the father-as-subject in favor of the son-as-subject. In Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil, Alain Badiou discusses fidelity to the event in the context of the event as the situational perspective on the process of truth: “[I]f I want to be really faithful to it [the event], I must completely rework my ordinary way of ‘living’ my situation” (2002, 42). This fidelity requires not only an involuntary attention to the event, but also a personal reformatting reminiscent of that performed by George W. Bush personally and the U.S. globalizing effort more generally.

Initially, the original event is either naturally invisible (in terms of its limited success, like the 1993 World Trade Center bombing), or rendered so by historical denarrativization (the Crusades as pseudo-benevolent), making its repetition a means of visibility. Where the 1993 bombing established some visibility, that visibility was not at a level comparable to the desire of Ramzi Yousef. In fact, the enduring memories of the 1993 bombing center around the ineffectual evacuation plans enacted at the World Trade Center and the comical attempts to retrieve the deposit placed on the bomb-laden Ryder truck by one of the plotters. These memories do not fulfill the visibility sought by Yousef, making them rather markers of the invisibility of the event on the terms of its perpetrators. Though a relative success as an entry point into actions on the U.S. mainland, the 1993 bombing is portrayed as a failure, at least prior
to September 11, its deemphasis mimicking that of the Crusades. Daniel Libeskind concludes that “[i]nvisible disasters precede those that can be seen,” and for September 11, the relative failure of the nearly invisible 1993 attempt is made highly visible in the success of September 11 (1997, 155).

This visibility also enables the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation to make the abuses of U.S. foreign policy visible beneath the shattered ideology of the state through the completion of Ramzi Yousef’s work by Mohamed Atta. Prior to September 11, abuses of U.S. foreign policy are concealed beneath the veneer of homeland security; as the mainland has not been attacked in any significant way, then the foreign policy measures must be necessary to and justified for its protection. However, in the aftermath of the event, the aggressive reaction undertaken by the U.S. reveals not only its preceding aggression, but also its adoption of the so-called “terrorist” methods to enact that aggression. Where tribal actions are viewed as low-intensity warfare when the U.S. is on the (covert) offensive, as in Central America in the 1980s, they are viewed as “terrorist” when the U.S. is on the (overt) defensive, when read against the similar methodologies of those branded “terrorist.” Visibility thus performs a dual function; the event makes the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation known to the world as a formidable actor, while also making the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation known to the world as an abominable abuser.

The al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation is able to achieve this visualization of U.S. abuses by completing and altering the dynamic of historical repetition, creating a repetition that also acts as a repair or reperfection of the dynamic. September 11 is not without historical referents, not only the accurate reference to 1993 and the fallacious reference to Pearl Harbor in 1941, but also Muhammad’s early efforts to enforce Islam as the new monotheism. In these
early efforts, “the sanctuaries of the three goddesses [pagan goddesses Manat, al-Lat and al-Uzza] had been destroyed” (Ali 2002, 26). Mohamed Atta similarly selected three targets (the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and [likely] the Capitol Building) and destroyed three (both towers of the World Trade Center and a portion of the Pentagon and/or Flight 93 itself). The event is not just a continuation of historical referents, but also the conclusion of the work of Ramzi Yousef, a culminating action that finishes the open-ended aim of Yousef as a successful repetition. This action further specifies the field of historical referents as the literal completion of 1993 and the figurative completion of the early stages of the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation timeline.

That Yousef’s relative failure in 1993 precedes Atta’s nearly unqualified success illustrates the alteration of the dynamic of historical repetition, as “Ramzi’s attack reversed the law of historical repetition – it was the farce that preceded the tragedy of September 11” (Benjamin and Simon 2003, 14). In fact, Yousef’s farce finds its repetition in September 11 as well, not in the unkempt operations of the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formations, whose operations, though hardly airtight, put the 1993 conspirators to shame, but instead the ineffectual U.S. defense barriers whose patent failure at all levels is almost too convenient not to bear the mark of some sort of mark of solicitation. September 11 acts not only as an event repetition and a methodological repetition (of the tribal mode, the plane as weapon, and the repeated event itself), but also a structural repetition, what Slavoj Žižek calls “‘international terrorist organizations’ [as] the obscene double of the big multinational corporations” (2002, 38). Al Qaeda inhabits the corporeal body of the U.S. in the event of September 11 by inhabiting the corporate body (or rather, the corporate multinational model mimicking its tribal form). As the
al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation achieves visualization, so too does the U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation, though the U.S. version differs considerably.

The U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation chooses a multiplicitous repetition dynamic in its efforts at visualizing the Manichean evil of the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, applying repetition not only in its cultivation of memory in rebuilding and memorial efforts, but also in its mimicry of Britain. This odd return to the father is also inverted in George W. Bush’s return to the son, Jesus. George H.W. Bush establishes the language of U.S. visualization in the climate of the first Gulf War, offering strong language reminiscent of that used by George W. Bush after September 11: “This will not stand. This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait” (2001, 106). George W. Bush uses similarly uncompromising language on September 11, stating that “[f]reedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward. And freedom will be defended” (quoted in Thompson 463). In both cases, the language implies an intercession on behalf of the world, one operating on a sense of election and the unilateral charge it endows.

Linguistic doubling parallels a similar doubling evident in Daniel Libeskind’s architectural ethic as outlined in “Daniel Libeskind: Welcome to the 21st Century,” where he talks of architecture in literary terms, where “[w]hen a book is first read, one doesn’t just digest it immediately… one has to reread it again and again,” the repetition of the ideological function of the World Trade Center in Libeskind’s Freedom Tower acting as such a valuing action, as will be seen in Chapter Two (“Daniel…” 2000). Libeskind offers a different sort of repetition in his description of the Holocaust as “one human being murdered six million times,” a conception that finds a referent in U.S. efforts to hyperpersonalize September 11 into the material realm of bodies (2000, 92). In the case of September 11, there are three thousand individual murders
rather than a symbolic action, as is evident in the bland de- and re-personalizing memorial proposals, also discussed in Chapter Two.

U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation methodology concerning visibility and repetition approximates the efforts of imperial Britain, what Ellen Meiksins Wood calls “the US compulsion to achieve ever more massive global supremacy” (2003, 163). Neil Smith similarly notes the relation between the creation of Iraq in 1920 “as a British mandate after a bitter contest over the area’s future… [and its recreation] after a US-led invasion” (2005, 3). As the origin of U.S. colonialists, Britain is a father of sorts, making U.S. mimicry of British imperialism a repeated effort to regain the father. George W. Bush’s repeated search for Jesus (as a paternal Son) performs a similar action, where even after one epiphany, “[w]hen Billy Graham asked him a year later if he was right with God, he answered ‘No’” (Mansfield 2003, 66). This search for the father, be it the imperial British father or the divine and purportedly reciprocal God/Jesus, defines the place of the father in the fundamentalist formation where, as the father is compromised in the Oedipal progression, Moses takes his place. Repetition creates a generational connection between the event of the father and that of the son, and acts as a compulsive measure through which the son may achieve an agency absent in the father by revising and improving upon his action, yielding a level of visibility heretofore absent.

Father Moses

Fathers, within the dynamic of repetition, are more than simply performers of the initial event; they are the intellectual forbears of the repeated event, and construct the terms through which the sons learn of and eventually perform the event again. These fathers are then rendered partial non-agents by the completion of the Oedipal process, making the son the new father-as-old father, Moses. In the case of Osama bin Laden, the father serves an early instructive role:
Osama learned at his father’s knee and by the age of seven was studying with Islamic fundamentalist groups” (Unger 2004, 91). This example illustrates the intellectual function of the father, as bin Laden’s father instills both the fundamentalist ethic and, in the process, implies the initial event, laying the groundwork for bin Laden’s later participation in various repetitions of that event.

Still, despite the intellectual benevolence of the father, his distinctly human nature undermines his establishment as a proper ideal, “a father who would close his eyes to desires” (Lacan 1977, 321). This ideal father’s approximation of divinity, when combined with a proclivity to action, fulfills sets the standard. Moses best fits the ideal father image. An exceptional, great man rendered heroic by various religious mythologies (including Islam and Christianity), whose willingness to act establishes him as a leader, imitated by his contemporary manifestation, Mohamed Atta. That Atta would fulfill the role of a contemporary Moses is oddly fitting, given his own disinclination for Israel and Freud’s acknowledged anti-Semitic rendering of Moses in Moses and Monotheism. Like Moses, Atta “place[s] himself at the head of a throng of culturally inferior immigrants,” taking the reins of a hijacking group composed mainly of Arab men unused to the customs and language of the U.S. as a tribal leader and guiding them to more significant accomplishments (Freud 1947, 23). Like Moses, “it is he [Atta] who chooses a small group of men and leads them through the test that will make them worthy to found a community based on his principles” (Lacan 1992, 173). Atta in this sense fulfills the genetic role of the father in providing the constituent elements for further repetition to his followers. The degree of control, the paternal leadership assumed by Atta places him in danger of becoming a despot in the manner of the despotic machine, as he “flees from the Egyptian machine into the wilderness and installs his new machine there, a holy ark and a portable temple, and gives his
people a new religious-military organization” (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 193). Atta escapes the limited possibility of Egypt as a failed homeland to lead his tribe into the holy, portable airliners, producing a newly viable al Qaeda in the process. Already a leader for his initial motivating prowess, Atta becomes a great man in the commission of the repeated event.

The September 11 plot requires the expertise of the great man, and Atta proves himself worthy of the moniker, acting as an avant-garde agent of election in his ideologically-minded actions while in the paternal leadership position. Much like Moses in relation to the Exodus, Atta’s purview is extensive: “[A] small crowd would not have been worth the while of that ambitious man, with his great schemes” (Freud 1947, 53). In terms of ambition and eventually commission, Atta is up to the challenge of the “great man,” taking not only the immediate tribal members upon his back, but also the entirety of the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, his action existing as a defining event for the formation. Atta’s agency in providing the final selection of targets also parallels the agency of Moses, as it is “Moses [who] had stooped to the Jews, had made them his people; they were his ‘chosen people’” (1947, 67). The concern of anti-Semitism implied in the notion of stooping to the Jews creates another common point between Freud’s Moses and Atta’s, as Atta performs a similar stooping in his targeting of the larger, pseudo-Zionist U.S. The ability to act as an agent of election is present in Atta as well, an ability to externally elect absent from the (self-) elected U.S. Christian fundamentalist formation.

These various abilities, the specific vision of the Exodus/September 11 plot, place Moses/Atta in the vanguard, “closer to the avant-garde, by which I really mean Moses” (Libeskind 1997, 113). Atta is a leader and methodological and ideological innovator not so much in the sense of originality, but rather in the sense of being the first to make such abilities visible for the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation. Ethan Ernest, a woodworker and
eventual World Trade Center site rebuilding contestant, offers a useful vision of Atta’s function in metaphorical terms: “The snake is a symbol of healing in almost every culture and a symbol of America, and Moses nailed the snake to the cross with a golden spike to heal the whole world, and Moses was revered by Muslims, Jews, and Christians” (quoted in Nobel 2005, 67). Atta similarly nails the U.S. to its own fundamentalist formation, as embodied by the cross, using the airliner and the commerce it implies as a golden spike, healing the globalized world by fragmenting the control of the U.S. global state. It is this fragmentation of the global state that acts as the first site of resistance, but it is certainly not the last utilized on and around September 11. Moses, as the ideal father figure and also a distinctly innovative persona, occupies an aspirational position sought by Mohamed Atta, a fellow Egyptian, whose own biographical specificities accord closely with those of Freud’s Moses.

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1 The image of Ramzi Yousef is taken from http://www.terrorismfiles.org/individuals/ramzi_yousef.html (accessed March 6, 2006).
6 “Mediatized” is a neologism referring to the absorption of entities into media, with an associated tendency to soundbite-like abbreviation and condensation.
7 For Alain Badiou in Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil (Trans. Peter Hallward. New York: Verso, 2002), the event, “something that cannot be reduced to its ordinary inscription in ‘what there is’” (41), necessitates an “evental fidelity… a real break (both thought and practised) in the specific order in which the event took place (be it political, loving, artistic or scientific…)” (42). During the month in which this thesis was submitted, the long-awaited translation of Badiou’s Being and Event (Trans. Oliver Feltham. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006) was released, which similarly addresses the event.
Baudrillard has addressed universals after 9/11 in *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays* (New York: Verso, 2003) as well.

9 Deleuze and Guattari not only endow the illness, the cellular perpetrating agent, with a sort of supernatural essence suggesting divinity, but also introduce the idea of the hijacker-as-illness, to be discussed in Chapter Three.


I. The Idea of the “State”

In *Fundamentalism*, one of the seminal texts of the modern Islamist movement, lay theologian Sayyid Qutb recounts his observation of the Jean-Baptiste Huet painting *The Fox in the Chicken Coop* (Figure 6) at the San Francisco Museum:

The fox is in the chicken coop and the atmosphere is oppressively dark. The fox has already attacked a young hen, which appears exhausted and deathly alarmed in the claws of the monster who is showing his teeth and has already also terrified the others… Chicken eggs are scattered like the hen’s companions in the space of the canvas. Nearby stands the rooster, master of the house, helpless and confused, unable to aid his dying mate, though her guardian. As for the other chickens, one appears worried and surprised, another shudders in despair that there should be so much evil in life, and a third seems to ask “how did this happen?” The atmosphere and the colors on the brilliant canvas articulate what words fail to convey. (1997, 223)
What results from this description is not only a vivid sense of the scene depicted in the painting, but also a prescient metaphor for the scene depicted on September 11, 2001: there is the fox-as-hijacker on the attack, a monster that instills primal terror; there is the powerless rooster-as-national defense, an ineffectual reactionary; and there are the other chickens-as-average Americans, wrought with despair and questions of how such a thing could happen. For Qutb, this scene neatly encapsulates his pithy, epigrammatic statements about the bedrock values that underlie the American character. In “The America I Have Seen,” he says: “Be strong, and you will have everything. Or be weak and no ideology can help you, and there will be no place for you in the great realm of living” (2000, 16). Despite its status as ruler of the roost and baron of the barnyard, once the fox ambles slyly onto the scene, the permeability of the rooster and his state/homeland are put into stark relief, turning an empire and its defense into so much wing flapping and chicken shit. Qutb goes on to note the tenuous qualifications of the rooster/U.S. to maintain its homeland, saying, “[a]ll that requires mind power and muscle are where American genius shines, and all that requires spirit and emotion are where American naïveté and primitiveness become apparent” (26). Essentially, the U.S. trumps the world in spheres intellectual and physical, its scholarly and territorial achievements outstripping any peers, to the point of insular self-satisfaction. However, once the competition is transferred to the realm of the intangible, Qutb’s rural metaphor gains currency, the U.S. appearing as a rube who, despite transferring the responsibility of homeland to a single city, can achieve no better result than to be outfoxed. As Qutb begins at the scene of the crime, so too must this argument, at once posing and providing answers to the questions raised abstractly in Qutb’s earlier formulation of the compromised homeland, while also illustrating the ways in which that homeland has changed
from the ruralist barnyard of the pre-globalized world to the urbanized range of the universal city.

**The Oedipal Homeland**

Before anatomizing the processes that ensue when the homeland is compromised, one must first look at the primary reason for the intense response to such compromising of the homeland, namely its Oedipal nature. In the course of its creation, the homeland takes on a maternal aspect due to its birthing of ideological tenets and further nurturing of those tenets within the ideology of the homeland. However, before such maternal emergence may take place, the paternal role must first emerge. This is typically manifested in a founding group of early ideologues, fittingly called the “Founding Fathers” in the case of the U.S. homeland. Though both alike in creation, the father and mother then diverge, the mother’s stereotypical role enlarging to include not only conception, but early care. The father’s role is subject to reduction and challenge, and is mainly concerned with providing for the newly birthed citizen, a task he seizes with equally stereotypical force in the specter of early imperialism, solidifying the Oneness of his own homeland by defining and exploiting the supposed Otherness of the world outside.

It is here that the Oedipal structure of the origin of the homeland acts as the basis for the military state as the citizen son. Seeing the cumbersome, dated methodologies of his traditionally imperialist father, the son offers a newer, leaner, less visible form of neo-imperialism in the form of the military state (to be discussed below) in the course of his Oedipal supersession of the father. The father, stereotypical protector of the mother-as-homeland, is superseded by the son who, denied agency by the exclusivity of the parental dyad, seeks a form of protection that grants him agency via military strength. This agency comes not in the manner
of his father’s lumbering, materialist empire, but rather in a more fluid, globalized (first economic, then) ideological empire whose methodology renders the father irrelevant, while also soliciting the eventual indirect compromise of the mother homeland by the son through the permitted penetration of the homeland by outside forces.

Though the son attempts to free himself from the legacy of the father through supersession of the father and his role in relation to the mother, the anxiety over that influence and the persistence of the patronym make that distancing problematic at best. Anxiety over the influence of the Founding Father and his accompanying ideologies is such that the military son adopts reactionary methodologies in direct opposition to those ideologies, though in such direct opposition as to recall the ideologies at every turn. An example of this opposition is the divergence between the U.S. ideal of freedom and the edicts of the USA PATRIOT Act, which sponsor an assault on any and all forms of freedom. If the operation of this anxiety is not enough to qualify the son’s attempt at freedom, the fact that he must operate under one of the many names of the father is surely sufficient. The father many operate under multiple names; in the case of the U.S., these may include not only “U.S.,” but also “America,” and may include more abstract versions like “superpower,” “policeman,” and even “hegemon.” Though he may attempt to distance himself from the specific father, the son’s actions in the role of the father necessarily reference these names, making full evasion an impossibility. As such, the Oedipal complex defines the construction of the homeland, the son-as-citizen seizing agency from the father-as-protector through the creation of a military state that, in its flawed methodologies, results in the compromised maternal homeland through the permitted penetration of the mother, yielding further fathers and sons.
The Idea of the “State,” Continued

When the larger homeland is revealed to be subject to challenge, the imperiled imperialist magnifies its remaining territory, focusing on and then universalizing its prized remainder, in this case none other than New York City. Perhaps the most troubling element of this universalizing magnification is revealed by Michel de Certeau in his “Walking in the City,” from The Practice of Everyday Life, where he notes that “[t]he ‘city’ founded by utopian and urbanistic discourse is defined by the possibility of a threefold operation: 1. the production of its own space… 2. the substitution of a nowhen… for the indeterminable and stubborn resistances offered by traditions… [and] 3. finally, the creation of a universal and anonymous subject which is the city itself” (1988, 94). All of this is “made possible by the flattening out of all the data in a plane projection” (94). It follows that this neospatial, atemporal, subject city is created by a plane flattening, recalling the hijacked airliners of September 11 and therefore making their function not so much the intended crippling of New York City and its American habitus, but rather the creation of the city as subject, the (“terrorist”) capital of the world.

Plane flattening here operates in a number of ways, including not only the more literal homogenization of data so as to yield the ahistorical city, but also the more figurative flattening of the World Trade Center by the hijacked airliners, an action that realizes the potential energy of the city and its ability to reincarnate itself in an altered form. Daniel Libeskind identifies this action as a necessary and inevitable event, saying “I think that every city has its day, on which it is really created”; in the case of New York City, it is September 11 (1997, 163). Once subject to the plane flattening, the city “is transformed for many people into a ‘desert’ in which the meaningless, indeed the terrifying, no longer takes the form of shadows but becomes… an implacable light that produces this urban text without obscurities, which is created by a
technocratic power everywhere and which puts the city-dweller under control (under control of what? No one knows)” (de Certeau 1988, 103). De Certeau’s desert of light recalls both Baudrillard’s/Žižek’s post-September 11 “desert of the real” as well as Libeskind’s own fetishization of light as an agent or manifestation of freedom.  

This bright light obliterates the shadowy spaces in which memory resides, disrupting the cycles of the citizen to the point where, as Libeskind posits, “Berlin… is not the only city which lacks memory,” throwing New York City into the mix as the heir of the ahistorical homeland (2003, 47). By erasing the zones of memory, Libeskind’s light removes both the city from the event, universalizing New York City to the point where it becomes not itself, but the world, and the event from the city, erasing the physical evidence of the event and thus decertifying the event as a part of the historical narrative of the created city. Libeskind further articulates the ahistorical nature of New York City-as-magnified homeland, saying “New York is the capital of the world – it has to be optimistic, a cultural answer to the shadows that fall on the world” (quoted in Goldberger 2004, 172) and “show[ing] a slide with the new tower he envisioned in the background and the Statue of Liberty in the foreground… [h]is new skyscraper ‘answering the call of the Statue of Liberty’” (172). Both serve as symbols of immigration, the first destructive, the second constructive, necessitating a swift response to the task at hand.

The form of response to the increasingly permeable homeland is, as per Qutb’s metaphor, cocksure, and wholly in line with the primitivist America he describes. George H.W. Bush puts it best, in a terse phrasing equal to the challenge of Qutb’s epigram: “A line has been drawn in the sand” (2001, 92). Given the context of this statement, offered in the Gulf War period, Bush’s line in the sand indicates a reactionary extension of the initially besieged homeland from its defensive retraction to the universal city (itself a global[ized] phenomenon) to the constitution of
a border on Middle Eastern turf, a joining of the battle in the territory of the Other. As a good son, George W. Bush carries on the family trait of spatial intrusiveness, admitting that “I’ve always invaded other people’s spaces, leaning into them, touching, hugging, getting close,” a rather euphemistic way of conceding his invasive tendencies that attempts to put a friendly, pseudo-benevolent sheen on a characteristic manifested to neo-imperial ends (1999, 81).

When attacked and revealed to be permeable, the invasive U.S. homeland performs a neat, if counterintuitive, mode of attribution, a mode captured most succinctly in Freud’s Beyond the Pleasure Principle: “The notion of ‘natural death’ is quite foreign to primitive races; they attribute every death that occurs among them to the influence of an enemy or of an evil spirit” (1962, 45). Qutb’s American primitiveness creates the American as Freud’s primitive race, making the deaths of September 11 necessarily attributable to an enemy, and evil spirit or, in this case, a tight combination of the two in the Islamist “terrorist.” In accordance with this primitiveness, the U.S. attributes the deaths of September 11 to an equally primitive, antiquated notion of state actors as the only viable agents of targeted destruction.

After the identification of the enemy, the mode of attribution dictates that the enemy necessarily be a state, the mode being incapable of comprehending non-state actors in its assumption that the world mimics the form of the U.S., and rendering the natural death of the fictive “terrorist” state a foreign concept. As such, natural death is discarded in favor of beneficent and beneficial use of the fictive state, as remarked upon by Qutb: “The Americans and their allies… need [Islam] to fight Communism in the Middle East, after having fought Islam for nine hundred years… They need Islam as they need the Germans, the Japanese, and the Italians whom they wrecked in the last war and are now trying… to get on their feet again so that they can confront the Communist goblin…” (1997, 226). Fictive “terrorist” states are therefore little
more than stooges, U.S. puppet states that are both neutralized threats to and imperialistic extensions of the U.S. homeland. However, all states are not so cooperative, and when a state should happen to disagree with the dictates of its homeland advisor, a dialogue of sorts, or rather pseudo-dialogue, is opened. Rather than the Cold War of the past, what emerges is a Called War (to be discussed below), solicited via a pseudo-dialogue that prohibits discourse rather than fomenting it.

   Dialogue implies at least two participants, with the advantage of including multiple viewpoints; as described in Ella Shohat and Robert Stam’s “From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism,” dialogic participants “are ‘aware of and mutually reflect one another’… [and are not] discrete bounded individuals or cultures but rather… permeable, changing individuals and communities” (1995, 48-9). These participants involve themselves in discourse that “leaves both interlocutors changed” (49). However, both the U.S. and al Qaeda configurations of dialogue fail to meet these criteria, rendering themselves pseudo-dialogues in the process. In the U.S. version of pseudo-dialogue, as expressed by administration ideologue Paul Wolfowitz in the course of outlining the Bush Doctrine of preemption, there is no notion of listening to the fictive “terrorist” state, simply of “ending states who sponsor terrorism” (quoted in Barber 2003, 87). That this notion of eliminating already non-existent fictive states is not new to the Bush Doctrine is evident in the language of a captured al Qaeda manual, where it is “the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine gun” that is understood to demarcate the terms of the pseudo-discussion, a canny understanding absent from the doctrinal obscurity of the U.S. formation (Laqueur 2004, 403).

   Though both purport to be forms of dialogue, neither the Bush Doctrine nor the al Qaeda formulation meet the criteria outlined by Shohat and Stam; true, the participants are aware of
each other, and their tactics are eerily similar. However, the notion of permeability is problematic, given its presence only when solicited, and the change within the interlocutors is more a hardening of preexisting rhetoric than a considered, if selective, adoption of the traits of the discursive partner. For both the Bush Doctrine and the al Qaeda manual formations of the pseudo-dialogue, it is military agents, either formal or informal, who operate within the symbolic field. In the former, the implied agents of the ending may only come via forceful intervention, in the latter via the more specific methodologies of ending discussed therein. These military agents exist as a closer approximation of the true state than either the American notion of the pan-continental homeland of the American-held notion of the static “terrorist” state, in either case acting as the reservoir of national characteristics, as noted by Michael Parenti: “[T]he military is seen as the special repository of national devotion and patriotic sacrifice” (2004, 32). By locating the exemplary manifestations of national ideals in military agents, the U.S. is able to endow its perpetual “war on terror” with a feeling of performed nationhood that preserves the homeland so long as troops are on the march. Similarly, al Qaeda is able to actualize the message of jihad from within its foundational fundamentalist Islam while creating a mobile pseudo-state whose very mobility drives recruiting, the numerous U.S. attacks on unrelated areas being a function of that mobility.

Therefore, the “state,” as conceived in national mythologies, does not exist, yielding to a magnification not of the prized city but of the prized military. Jean Baudrillard contends that “if the State really existed, it would give a political meaning to terrorism. Since terrorism manifestly has none (though it has other meanings), this is proof that the State does not exist, and that its power is derisory” (2003, 56). The apolitical status of “terrorism,” or the U.S. comprehension of it as such, comes the necessary (and sometimes forced) dissolution of the
The pseudo-dialogue between the U.S. and al Qaeda proves a fitting manifestation of the fictive nature of the participating states, and in fact exists as an accurate location of their origin within the ideological realm, stripping the state itself of any material, territorial referent, while endowing the pseudo-dialogue with a distinctly material basis in military force.

The origin of the fictive “terrorist” state provides an interesting, if at times illogical, look at U.S. constitution of its homeland in opposition to the non-existent homeland of the Other. Before going on, a brief moment of clarification is necessary regarding the language of the Other: as an individual, one defines his/herself in relation to others out of sheer necessity. Once those others are used for oppositional self-definition, they are essentialized into a singular Other, the antithesis of the self-defined One, which also holds an exotic fascination for the One as a site for stigmatized performance of that forbidden to the One. Essentially, the One always despises and desires the Other. Jacques Lacan states that “[t]he Other of the Other only exists as a place,” creating at once the idea of the U.S. as Other to the al Qaeda Other, with the accompanying compromised status accorded to the Other (1992, 66). Lacan also creates the idea that the U.S. exists only as a place, making the connection between the ideological pretenses of the American homeland and the literal homeland tenuous at best, and making way for the magnification of the military agent as state in its protection of the physical homeland beneath the ideological one. With the mobile military agent as state, the state becomes transitory, and therefore relatively unidentifiable, save for rare moments of static presence. However, those static moments, where the smaller military state resides in the larger fictive national “state,” still require magnification to approximate true location, as the military state regards the “state” as Other from within.

Such difficult processes of identification lead the U.S. to search for, and locate, a simpler means of pinpointing the al Qaeda military state that yields only its larger, fictive “terrorist”
counterpart, exemplified by the disjunction between the nation of Afghanistan as a whole and the subset of mountainous al Qaeda strongholds. Deleuze and Guattari indirectly identify the means of fictive identification, while also introducing the “state” machine: “This subject itself is not at the center, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, with no focused identity, forever decentered, defined by the states through which it passes” (1992, 20). Here, the military state-as-subject is tangential in its concern with edges-as-borders in the quest for intrusion (received or sought out), while the “state” machine of the fictive national “state” occupies the center, leaving the fictive identifier to define the “state” as that through which the military state passes. Syed Abul Ala Maududi offers the definitive word on the relevance of “state” as a term, observing that, when speaking of offensive and defensive jihad, “[t]hese terms are relevant only in the context of wars between nations and countries, for technically the terms ‘attack’ and ‘defense’ can only be used with reference to a country or a nation,” illustrating a clear understanding of the “state”lessness of military state interaction (Laqueur 2004, 400). Instead of the fictive “terrorist” state as defined by the “state” machine of the U.S. homeland, there is only the magnified, mobile military state for either side. The “terrorist” state only exists as a deterritorialized point of interaction between the two military states defined by the chaos of conflict, seen in Afghanistan, Iraq and, most notably, Washington D.C. and lower Manhattan.

If the mobility of the military state, in opposition to the static fictive “terrorist” state, results in a deterritorialization of the state, then that deterritorialization creates a profound discomfort in the fictive identifier who, operating from a position of non-existent national “state”hood, sees a premonition of their own demise in the sliding away of the territorial. Once more, Deleuze and Guattari pinpoint the crux of the issue, asking “[w]hat can be done so that the decoding and deterritorialization constitutive of the system do not make it flee through one end
or another that would escape the axiomatic and throw the machine into a panic (… an Arab highjacker…)?” (1992, 260). The very existence of the military state decodes and deterritorializes the “state,” provoking flight in the fictive definer (in one sense) and flight in the Arab hijacker (in the other/by the Other), throwing the “state” machine into a post-September 11 panic treatable only through liberal doses of conservative nationalism. “State”s are thus fictions conceived to obscure the operation of the military state in the deterritorialized space of globalization.

**Communities of Belief**

Beneath the grand conception of the fictive “state,” and prior to the explicitly military state that results from and contributes to deterritorialization is the idea of the community of belief, seen most clearly in the Islamic community but also present in the U.S. pre/military state. In his most well-known text, *Milestones*, Sayyid Qutb discusses the Muslim community at length in his argument for a revitalized, deterritorialized Muslim state in the Middle East, pointing out that the original Islamic civilization “was never a ‘nationality,’ but always a ‘community of belief’” (1981, 50). This form of state accords with the deterritorialized military state, as well as its approved analogue, the denationalized world of globalization. Tariq Ali illuminates the pre- or a-national nature of the Islamic community in its previous manifestation under the Caliphate, saying that “[i]n a world without nations or nationalisms, the Islamic identity came close to being a universal ‘nationality’” (2002, 62). National identity creates a sub-“state” state that, in its adoption of *jihad* for initial self-constitution, approximates the military state operating within Qutb’s conceptualization of the renewed community of belief.

Similarly, the U.S., in it early postcolonial days, acts as a likeminded pre- or a-national community. During the period after the territorial confirmation of the community in the
Revolutionary War, there is a brief moment of ideological rootlessness that precedes the mythologizing crystallization of its core ideals. In this brief moment, the “state” does not exist, only a community of belief outside of the specific guidance of concretized ideologes. However, the mythologizing core of ideals is nebulously present, enough so to inspire pan-revolutionary identification in 1789 France, where a similarly mobile improvised military state claimed its agency. At this stage, the “state” is undefined enough to exist beyond its eventual territorial locus, though in spirit only.

Qutb further outlines the renewed community in *Milestones*, underlining the necessity of strict adherence to Islam “whose manners, ideas and concepts, rules and regulations, values and criteria, are all derived from the Islamic source” as a precondition for renewal (1981, 9). His insistence avoids “state”-minded mythology only in the implicit tendency to military action contained in its reading of *jihad*. A similar courting and bare evasion of “state” mythology occurs in Qutb’s sentiment that *shari’ah* is essential to the Muslim community in its renewed form, though the location is immaterial, as “the only value which the soil can achieve is because on that soil God’s authority is established and God’s guidance is followed” (72). Here, Qutb’s dogmatism skirts “state” idealism only in its deterritorialized approach to the location of *shari’ah*, a deterritorialization that draws the renewed Muslim community decisively into the realm of the military state, rather than that of the national “state.” The U.S. performs a similar near adoption of “state”-ist myth on the part of its military state, taking Christian ideology as a foundational ethos, but ultimately avoiding pure dogmatism via the “city on a hill” self-conception that necessitates an often militarily evangelical application of faith. This application of faith deterritorializes the Christian-American national “state” in favor of the imperial diaspora of the missionary, deemphasizing the locus of the Christian ideal in favor of disinterested loci of
adoption. The community of belief is therefore the precursor of both the fictive “state” and the military state, its loose agglomeration of individuals providing the fodder for homogenizing nation-“state” mythologies and also the fragmentary population within the citizenry of one or many nation-“state”s.

**Raw Land and Lebensraum**

With the national “state” out of the picture, one clear problem arises: the status of the remaining physical territory of the traditional nation-“state” not under the watch of the military state, an unclaimed land of sorts that will not remain unclaimed for long. Tariq Ali provides a useful quote from President Conant of Harvard University, who speaks of “a period in which a fluid society overran a rich and empty continent...,” implying the latter-day U.S. as an empty land, raw space for future development (quoted in 2002, 258). Aside from the flagrant insult to Native American residents of that “empty” land, Conant’s statement also implies that, as the military state (though the truest summation of the nation-“state”’s ideals) is tangential, mobile, and diminutive compared to the territorial largesse of the “state,” what remains is the soft, chewy center of the “state” ripe for the taking due to its fictive status. Since the “state” does not exist, the nation-“state” may then be hollowed out at will, a raw space to be developed by the fittest military state in what is regarded, due to the collateral, non-entity status of the citizens within the hollowed, non-military portions of the “state”’s, not as imperialism, but simply as development. The inhabitants of these nation-“state”s, as civilians, do not hold military agency, making any suffering and/or death that occurs in the dispossession of their territorial “state” at best collateral damage, at worst a silence.

Along with the notion of development at will by military states is the concept of an “American Lebensraum,” a concept of living space adopted from Nazi ideology and applied in
a deterritorialized sense in the specter of globalization (Smith 2005, 109). Initially conceived as a means of establishing and justifying economic hegemony via the expansion of markets and the exportation of U.S. market ideology, “American Lebensraum” takes on a connotation closer to that of the Nazi original at the hands of the military state. Rather than seeking partial ideological hegemony in the limited focus on economics, military state Lebensraum is concerned with full ideological hegemony, with the ultimate aim of rehabilitating the failed and permeable homeland of the territorial U.S. nation-“state” in another territorial location. Ultimately, as in the original Nazi formulation, the military state Lebensraum aims to create ideological living space, to rhetorically hollow out nation-“state”s (making them bodies without organs, to be discussed below) and then prey on them (as organ machines, similarly discussed below) in a manner justified by the necessity of providing room for those rhetorically collateralized. Where the al Qaeda military state is content with a perpetually fluid renewed Muslim community, expansive or mobile, the U.S. military state is focused on a more restrictive fluidity. Each desires a community of belief, a locus of adherence; al Qaeda, as Islamist representative, wants only that which belonged to Islam under the Caliphate, while the U.S., displeased with its own permeability, wants that which has never belonged to it. Under the concept of the military state, the U.S. can never realize this desire, as the magnified military state cannot hope to control any territorial parcel larger than itself. The perceived need for living space thus generates the equally problematic perception of raw land, which may be taken by hegemony and/or force. When the distant neo-homeland fails, the U.S. looks next door, though it is a very large door.

“Love Thy Neighbor”?

Those in need often turn to those closest to them for help, and when an internal solution is lacking, a neighbor is the best place to start, though the particulars of the neighborly
relationship may make that start less about loving thy neighbor\textsuperscript{10} than initially thought by the needy. As the agent of globalization, the U.S. military state has humiliated numerous other military states who, by virtue of their juxtaposition next to the ever-expanding field of U.S. influence, achieve status as “neighbors” (however temporarily) not in the physical, but rather the ideological realm. “Neighbor” is in quotes here to indicate this relationship as one of coercion and colonization, rather than any sort of congenial neighborly relationship in the traditional sense. Tangential location of the military state away from the “state” center of the nation-“state” makes any breach of the border a compromise of the state skin (the skin acting as the primary layer of defense for the body of the nation-“state”), a wound demarcating a permeability that is extremely damaging and humiliating in the masculinist realm of military states. Once humiliated, a military state has little recourse other than to respond in kind; as Baudrillard puts it, “[i]t is that power which humiliated you, so it too must be humiliated”; if one is to love one’s “neighbor” as oneself, then if one’s “neighbor” humiliates, accordant humiliation must follow (2003, 26).

While a somewhat perverted “neighbor”ly reciprocity, and certainly beneath Žižek’s pronouncement that “the only appropriate stance is unconditional solidarity with all victims,” if one cannot love one’s “neighbor,” then at least they can attend to them in some manner (2002, 51). Žižek’s assertion that collective solidarity with all victims is ideal is admirable, and did in fact exist briefly after September 11 before the U.S. military state appeared through the confusion with an atypical degree of clarity, though it is far from unqualified in its ethical value. Didier Anzieu quotes from Turquet’s discussion of neighborly contact, most notably the following passage: “The continuity of the I with its neighbour’s skin is also a danger… [where] [t]he result for the I is the experience of a distended skin, joined to the neighbour who spoke last
but who is far away. Such distension may reach the point at which the skin breaks; to avoid this, the I dissociates itself and withdraws. It then becomes a ‘singleton’ and thus a deserter” (quoted in 1989, 29). Where Žižek sees the extension of “neighbor”ly skin to the “neighbor”hood in a solidarity of victimhood as unqualifiedly beneficial, Anzieu adds the wrinkle of skin permeation to the discussion. It is permeability that spurs the initial humiliation, motivating a response in kind, the repercussions of which are to be attended to through a means of solidarity. This solidarity, while not immediately inscribing humiliation, allows one military state potential access to the “state” innards of its nation-“state,” a dangerous temptation for the most ethical of military states, and an imperialistic carte blanche for the balance. For the citizen of the nation-“state,” their collateral fate is, under Žižek’s formulation, in the self-correcting hands of the welcomed military state, and essentially cast into the wind. The “neighbor”ly relationship is necessarily one of humiliation, making anything other than antagonistic “neighbor”s an impossibility in the globalized world.

The Globalized Citizen

Without a “state,” and at the mercy of military states, the globalized citizen is adrift, lost in a world without a home(land). In the context of their discussion of responses to the Islamist threat, Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon astutely note that “the historic distinction in American strategy between foreign and domestic has been erased,” and the erasure of foreign/domestic division is not limited to the U.S. (2003, 402). Rather, in the course of globalization, as spearheaded by the U.S. military state, the (U.S.) homeland is pluralized, existing everywhere in a sort of simultaneity that makes the U.S. a meta-“neighbor.” Before, a neighbor was either near or far, internal or external, but not both; with globalization, the U.S. ends up on both sides of the fence, a continent away as well as next door, outside as well as
inside the border of another nation—“state” or military state. This new pluralization of homeland facilitated by globalization does not extend to all homelands, but only that of the U.S. and its client nation—“state”s, forcing others to either assimilate or face the wrath of the U.S. military state. The globalized citizen is thus within the global state and outside of it (by virtue of undesirable race or ethnicity), creating a situation that recalls Lacan’s extimacy.\footnote{12} Lacan describes it as “intimate exteriority,” and a similar intimacy exists between the assimilating global state and the assimilated globalized citizen (1992, 139).

Libeskind recognizes the essential nature of the question of assimilation in his design for the Jewish Museum Berlin, though his questions ultimately skirt the issue: “What does it mean to be assimilated? What does it mean to be truly integrated into a culture? To feel that you have finally arrived?” (2003, 52). The first question, concerning the meaning of assimilation, is a relative irrelevance, given that the citizen of a nation—“state” is a globalized citizen, and is therefore denied genuine assimilation in favor of a perpetual mark distinguishing their provisional membership in the homeland from that of the military agent, the only true citizen. Similarly, the second question has little relevance, as true integration, even for a citizen of the nation—“state” where a military state temporarily resides, necessitates military involvement. Such involvement makes cultural integration consonant with either the faux culture of the “state,” or the valid culture of the military state (the military state being a subculture beneath the “culture” of the “state,” and therefore essentially unreachable). The last question nicely delineates the difference between the citizen of the nation—“state” under globalization and the military agent: if you are capable of arriving, then you cannot assimilate, as the mobility of the military state and its agents dictates the impossibility of arrival, while the static nation—“state” is immobile and is
therefore in a perpetual state of arrival, though the location is always the same, the center of the permeable “state.”

There is a brief moment in which the nation-“state” and its citizen may become aware of its status as the collateral center of the tangential military state, though as soon as that moment appears, its is subsumed by the profligate “state” and/or the military state. The citizen never actually knows of the “state”’s fictional status, though it reaches a point where it ought to, as described by Lacan: “[T]his subject who is supposed to know… who, in fact, knows nothing, should be regarded as liquidated, at the very moment when, at the end of the analysis, he [sic] begins at last, about you at least, to know something. It is therefore at this moment what he takes on most substance, that the subject who is supposed to know ought to be supposed to have been vaporized” (1981, 267). Lacan is here referring to the analyst, but his statement may also address the “state” citizen who, at the moment where they may in fact know (but do not), is vaporized, either via a persistent lack of knowledge beyond the temporal moment of potential realization, or through analytic inversion, then becoming part of the military state by assuming the agency of the analyst. The “state” itself is fictive and, in its collateral status, so too is the citizen (at least to the military state). The citizen is a subset of the “state” which “should know,” but does not; therefore endowing the citizen with a similar lack of knowledge. As the moment passes, the citizen who remains a citizen is resigned to a state of never knowing. Rather than gaining a state designation through attainment of military agency in the military state, the citizen is floated into the free market.

Neil Smith applies the free market to “terrorism” in *The Endgame of Globalization*, concluding that “[i]f the future holds a widely promised war on terrorism that itself embraces terror, this suggests a dire prospect – a world divided between state terrorism on the one side (the
American led “coalition of the willing,” including Britain and Israel) and free market terrorism of the al Qaeda sort on the other” (2005, 210). Smith is correct on the first count, though the embrace of “terror” is far from atypical of the military state; however, on the second count, his distinction between the (military) state and the free market is problematic. Both the military state and the free market operate in the field of deterritorialization, making the division between military states and nation-“state”s, not the state and the free market. Speaking of the limitations of China, George W. Bush offers a clear encapsulation of the military state in the free market, saying “[c]entral planners restrict choices; a free market frees individuals to make distinct choices and independent decisions. The market gives individuals the opportunity to demand and decide, and entrepreneurs the opportunity to provide” (1999, 61). Bush’s conception allows the military state to make decisions independent of the ideals of the nation-“state,” and also to demand and provide recourse to humiliation dealt by another military state. The globalized citizen is thus powerless to stop her/his subsumation by the global state, is unaware that this subsumation is even taking place, and is at the mercy of a free market mentality.

II. Holy Land

In the absence of, and in the active distaste for, a literal homeland, military agents and “state” citizens tend to seek out adoptive homelands. The literal homeland’s absence is the product of the necessarily deterritorialized military state, and the distaste for it is the product of the created idyllic “state” that results from the repulsion at the initial constitution of the military state. Searches for adoptive homelands cannot begin before agents and citizens create a strong association between or claim of the adoptive homeland as holy land, the claim functioning as an impetus and justification for the search. Tariq Ali recounts his personal moment of realization that “the U.S. mainland was an untouchable sanctuary, a sacred space that could never be
violated” (2002, 290). Though his realization is less of an act of adoption than an awareness of the adoptive process, the sentiment is familiar, and sets out a clear definition of the holy land itself as an inviolable space. Such self-creation of a holy land is indicative of the deterritorialized subject grasping at “state”s while also trying to endow their selected “state” with a modicum of respectability through divine association. For George W. Bush, the hometown of his youth, “the Midland of memory is the core image of his life, his West Texas version of a New Jerusalem,” and also a textbook creation of a holy land where none existed before (Mansfield 2003, 35). Bush’s example represents the magnifying tendency of the adoptive homeland phenomenon, as he takes a small town during a limited time span and universalizes it as a holy land and model of the globalized U.S. already being exported abroad.

A different type of adoptive homeland also exists; not the magnified, localized privileging of one’s “state” of origin, but rather the more truly adoptive adoption of another “state” as homeland, with a subsequent conversion into a military state (a task Bush also undertakes in the U.S.). Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon conclude that “[f]or bin Laden… his relocation to Afghanistan was nothing less than a recapitulation of the Hijra, Muhammad’s own migration to Medina… a retreat in a ‘time of weakness’” (2003, 139). Bin Laden takes Afghanistan, a rugged, unforgiving land, as his adoptive homeland which, though not far removed topographically from the equally remote Hadramat of his youth, is not a magnification of Saudi Arabia, but rather a pure adoption of a new homeland for later conversion to a military state, all occurring within the metaphor of Muhammad’s Hijra. What results is another holy land, a Jerusalem of the East to counter Bush’s Jerusalem of the West and the actual Jerusalem of the Middle East. The selection of Jerusalem is not a random one, as Jerusalem-as religious homeland falls under the purview of both Christianity and Islam, as well as Judaism, a
contentious locale that is both the origin of September 11 (in the dispute between Israel and Palestine) and the locus of its temporary resolution as the adoptive homeland of military agents from both sides. Holy lands therefore serve as both local, idealized personal homelands, as well as distant, adoptive specters.

**Palestine as an Adoptive Homeland**

The use of Palestine as an adoptive homeland is not a new phenomenon; Israel has done so systematically for over fifty years, to varying degrees of success, though it is the Islamists, the *jihadis*, who have done so to the greatest effect. Given the fictive nature of nation-“state”s in general, the contested timeline for Palestine’s creation and destruction is fittingly diffuse, reinforcing the fluidity of military agent adoption under the guise of the nation-“state.” Under the heading “Hamas in Palestine: Its Views on Homeland and Nationalism,” the Hamas Covenant states that “Hamas regards nationalism… as part and parcel of the religious faith,” identifying Palestine as *the* adoptive homeland for serious Islamists (Laqueur 2004, 435). To that end, Ramzi Yousef, “terrorist” luminary and ideological forbear of Mohamed Atta, identifies as “Pakistani by birth, Palestinian by choice” (McDermott 2005, 133). Yousef’s choice reflects not only part of the logic behind the popularity of Palestine as an adoptive homeland (everyone wants to be a hero), but also the fluid nature of homeland itself, which may be selected by the mobile military agent.

Like his ideological father, Mohamed Atta similarly selects Palestine as his adoptive homeland, maintaining the selection even to the point of incorporating it into his cover story after entry into the U.S. In Daniel Hopsicker’s *Welcome to Terrorland: Mohamed Atta & the 9-11 Cover-Up in Florida*, Atta is quoted as saying “[h]is mom was from the Homeland” (quoted in 2004, 110). He also assumes Palestine as the locus of the cause, again using the language of
“Homeland” to describe his adoptive performance, this time in jewelry: “He had a gold necklace with a figure on it, and I asked him what it was. He told me it was Palestine he wore around his neck. He called it the home country” (279). For both ideological father Yousef and ideological son Atta, Palestine is a perfectly viable adoptive homeland, made further so by the pair’s status as military agents via their participation in (for Yousef, before the real prominence of al Qaeda) and membership in al Qaeda, a valid military state. Atta’s father even joins in on the act, “refus[ing] to be interviewed … unless the New York Times paid $25,000 to a Palestinian charity,” an act of homeland adoption that raises the ante to the level of direct financial sponsorship, at once demanding recognition of and revealing Palestine as a non-state actor (Coombes and O’Connor 2002). Given its status as a state in exile, along with its proclivity for militarily-minded action, Palestine is the military state par excellence. The military state is made up of a mobile collection of agents who, like Yousef and Atta, may never even have lived near the actual territorial boundaries of the former “state” (rendered a military state in its territorial denial) but who, by virtue of their deterritorialized military agency, are able to claim the state as an adoptive homeland from as far afield as the U.S. Unique among the military states, Palestine is the lone such state whose entire territorial mass may be considered a military state; in an odd twist, a nation-“state,” or even a military state, may only become a total military state if its ceases to exist territorially. Before Israel, the Jews were a total military state; after Israel, the only total military state is Palestine.14

Despite its status as the lone total military state, the adoptive homeland of Palestine is not an easy selection for its adoptive military agents, the detrimental aspects nearly outweighing its exclusivity. Atta puts the difficulty into stark relief: “How can you laugh when people are dying in Palestine?” (quoted in McDermott 2005, 61). If the simple specter of daily death does not
prevent laughter, then the root cause of that death surely must; Tariq Ali states that “[t]he sufferings of European Jewry, from the pogroms of Tsarist Russia to the slaughterhouses of Auschwitz and Treblinka, were the responsibility of bourgeois civilization. The Palestinian Arabs were being made to pay for these crimes, while the West was arming Israel and paying it ‘conscience money’” (2002, 11). Capitalism here becomes a means through which the West, recently stripped of its literal colonies in the wake of World War II, may achieve a more subtle imperial pervasion, less a direct territorial crusade than an ideological Crusade in which Jerusalem is essentially retaken through creation and support of Israel. Punished for a Holocaust they had no part in, even the adoptive citizens of Palestine are unable to laugh, though their struggles are minute when compared to the daily trials of those living in Israeli-occupied Palestine.

Joyce M. Davis chronicles the difficult choices facing Palestinian youths, focusing on those who choose a purportedly glorious death over a miserable life. Davis offers unflinching images of the Palestinian dilemma, exemplified by two parental vignettes, one of a mother, the other a father. Um Iyad and her fellow mothers are “helpless to protect their children in a region consumed with hatred and violence,” and as such corrupt the Oedipal dynamic of the homeland phenomenon, a spoiled Oedipal reward resulting from the realities of an occupied state in which the failed father is matched by the failing mother (2003, 121). Similarly, Dr. Eyad Sarraj remarks upon the paternal difficulty, asking “[d]o you know what it means for a child to see his father spat at and beaten before his eyes by an Israeli soldier? … We don’t know ourselves except we observe that they lose respect for their fathers” (quoted in 2003, 125). This question sows the seed for the Oedipal urge of destroying the compromised father (the erasure of the failed father being necessitated by the larger quest for the restoration of the motherland,
Palestine, through a rebirth that results from and exists as the Oedipal consummation). Since the son cannot destroy a father who has already been destroyed, he must destroy his father’s destroyer, a broadening of the Oedipal frame that amplifies his aggression (and is true outside of Palestine as well, as will be seen in the Conclusion).

That so many would choose to adopt an essentially ruined “state” turned total military homeland appears counterintuitive, when just the opposite is the case. In the course of growing up, the establishment of one’s identity does include elements of national identity. For those coming of age in a world rendered borderless by globalization, that borderlessness is reflected in the adoption of the borderless Palestinian military state identity, as well as the literal borderlessness of self-detonation as suicide bombers. Life is difficult for young Muslims growing up in “state”s struggling to keep up with the blistering pace of (post)modernity, and for those aware of this difficulty and willing to act on it, there is no better adoptive homeland than the seat of Muslim suffering. Through the suicide bombers of Palestine, adopters turn the “state”less military state into a locus of action against the immediate Palestinian foe, Israel, and its adoptive patrons, none other than the U.S. military state and its puppet-masters, a second Israel.

**The U.S. as a Second Israel**

As this second Israel, the U.S. military state and, by virtue of territorial habit, the U.S. nation-“state,” is subject to the same localized ire practiced by the deterritorialized Palestinian total military state, then extended to the respective adoptive military agents, including each of the new Jerusalems in the process. The nature of the American-as-secondary/adoptive Israeli is first understood in the primarily economic terms of a boycott at an Islamist conference concerning the destruction of Israel via *jihad*, whose final communiqué reaches an unequivocal conclusion:
“The American products are exactly like the Israeli products. America today is a second Israel” (quoted in Emerson 2002, 207). While referring specifically to a planned boycott of goods and services (and possibly including oil), the above statement also applies to the more essential issue of homeland, the establishment of American mimicry as the lesser pole of the military state dynamic. Though largely created by and perpetuated by the overt and covert assistance of the U.S. military state, the Israeli military state (best observed in the nebulous border areas of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Golan Heights, and other such disputed areas) holds ultimate power in the relationship due to its territorial habit of occupying the recognized holy land of Jerusalem. Jerusalem stands as the conjunction of both deterritorialized and territorial religion, and therefore a Crusade holding of sorts. Through its status as the second Israel, the U.S. military state is in fact able to create the first real Israel-as-nation-“state” in the post-Biblical era, a recreation of a really uncreated (or Created) homeland, inverting the military state dynamic by allowing Israel, though holy, to only become holy land thanks to U.S. military state intervention. Rather than anti-Semitism, U.S. intervention creates a provisional Semitism, a national identity that it may manipulate to its own ends. This provisional Semitism is ultimately rooted in a sense of neocolonial appropriation, and is therefore less a pro-Semitic gesture than a functionally utilitarian approach that operates on a greater desire to seek benefit through Israel, not for Israel.

For those in the Middle East, the creation of the Israeli military state is the erasure of a common Muslim, Christian, and Jewish culture, “a profound rupture that was to become known as al-nakba, the disaster” and in essence the point of renewal for Middle Eastern military states, in the purest forms, from beneath the obscuring nation-“state”s (Ali 2002, 87). Where a previous coexistence between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism existed, the creation of Israel as a specifically Jewish homeland turns the prior presence of Islam and Christianity into an a
posteriori focus on Israel/Palestine as an adoptive homeland. For the U.S. military state, support of Israel is a gesture of returning the favor bestowed by the holy state within the Israeli nation-state” (the holy state being separate from the military state as the territorial locus of collective historical mythology) of borrowing holy land status in Bush’s Jerusalem of the West. For the collective Middle Eastern military state apparatus, especially bin Laden’s al Qaeda military state, support of Palestine is a gesture of favoring the return of the Islamist faith and its associated jihadist military state. The favor done for the U.S. by Israel includes, more notably, a final collection of the Jews as a precursor of a distinctly Christian apocalypse, a fundamentalist assembly supported by military aid. Israel thus acts as the crux of military state interaction in its supersession of Palestine, rendering Palestine a total military state in its profound deterritorialization, and rendering Israel a nearly total military state in its territorial flux, as facilitated by U.S. military reterritorialization of the Biblical holy land it so admires.

It is understandable that, when a cultural rupture is created, those directly and indirectly affected by the rupture may take issue with its creation, either through anger or reassertion of the creating ideology. This holds true for the creation of Israel. On the side of anger is Osama bin Laden who, in the rather polite terms of an early fatwa, bemoans “the Jews’ petty state and [efforts to] divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there… to guarantee Israel’s survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the [Arabian] Peninsula” (Laqueur 2004, 411). Using terminology of occupation, bin Laden implicitly points to not only the deterritorialized nature of the conflict, Jerusalem only remaining under Israeli watch via military insertion, but also the imperial aspects of the action through mention of the Crusades, an imperialism evident in the recent decolonizing concession concerning settlements
in the Gaza Strip. Bin Laden’s notion of Israel as a “petty state” also reflects the fictive nature of the “state” as a supposedly formidable material entity.

On the side of ideological reassertion is the U.S. military state, operating on the “state” mythological assertion that, as Qutb observes, “America’s bounty and prosperity evokes the dreams of the Promised Land” (2000, 10). The U.S. military state views itself as a military agent charged with (re)creation and perpetuation of such a holy land both at home and abroad (the two becoming simultaneous under globalization). Rather than heeding the dangerous consequences of rupture, the U.S. military state simply takes the fundamentalist charge of its fictive nation-state” to heart, using its special status to take on the special task of (re)creating the holy land in both the ideological and material spheres. An excellent example of this recreation within the territorial habitus of the U.S. military state is the World Trade Center memorial proposed by Miró Rivera Architects, which includes “a 140-foot-long, 40-foot-tall ‘Weeping Wall,’ which will serve as a ceremonial backdrop” that approximates the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem, though in a much different form (Stephens 2004, 216). Architecturally speaking, the memorial reinscribes the exceptionalist notion of divine election endemic to U.S. monumental architecture, a reinscription more thoroughly present in Libeskind’s Freedom Tower. Instead of the ancient, there is the current; instead of the wall as an end in itself (along with its mediating functions), there is the wall as a ceremonial backdrop; instead of a religious setting, there is the setting of American religion, commerce. The reasserted ideology is therefore both an exception, dictating special status as a charge to (re)create holy land abroad and to approximate it within the habitual territory of the U.S. military state, and a rule, or rather the rule of the logic of commerce, with Israel as a market of the holy and a potential substitute, fully adoptive homeland for the U.S. military state so severely compromised and humiliated in the events of September 11. Israel
therefore serves not only as a promised (home)land of sorts to a U.S. military state whose maternal homeland has been compromised, but also the site of completion for its fundamentalist perception of the world. As such, the U.S. is not only the beneficiary of Jewish election, but also present at its performance, and stands as a proxy target for those displeased with the rupture that election creates.

**America as the Maternal Fetish Object**

American concern for and creation of holy land is not an exclusively outgoing action, but also an incoming and internal action, visible most notably in the phenomenon of America as a maternal fetish object,\textsuperscript{15} the Oedipal mother of Americans adoptive and otherwise, as described above. Daniel Libeskind often discusses America in receptive, doting terms in contrast with the cold Europe of the period immediately following the Holocaust, noting that “Eastern and Central Europeans have a fondness for taking photos of their children posed in front of haystacks” (2004, 179). Libeskind’s choice of backdrop privileges the notion of America as a bountiful heartland of production, a homeland of maternal reproduction of the disenfranchised Other into a (military) agent. America, as the receiver of those unsupported by or unwanted by European nation-“state”s, offers the huddled masses the opportunity for self-definition and agency (or so the mythology goes), nurturing the new (military) agents through their young and defenseless days as only a mother can. George W. Bush holds a similar version of America-as-mother: “[H]e truly loves and admires this country… [and was] forced to experience the vicious, unprovoked, and successful assault of a venerated object of his affections” (Renshon 2004, 142). With this mother under attack, or perhaps perceived as such in the primal scene of September 11, the adoptive military agent must seek a father to strike, though the “terrorist” is far from a perfect fit.
After taking Palestine as the adoptive homeland of his Islamist aims, Mohamed Atta performs a partial adoption of the U.S. nation-“state” as a homeland, at the advice of his mother: “You need to get a doctorate, she told him; go to America” (McDermott 2005, 84). The recommendation by his mother acts not only as a blessing for Atta, but also a transfer of maternal authority from his mother/Palestine to the American nation-“state,” though also yielding an overabundance of homeland necessitating eventual destruction of a portion. In a less direct manner, the U.S. nation-“state” blesses Atta’s transfer of maternal authority at an earlier date, even preceding his adoption of Palestine through “the ‘Congress-Bundestag Program,’ overseen by the U.S. State Department and the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development” (Hopsicker 2004, 335). As such, Atta’s adoption of and blessing by the U.S. nation-“state” predates, though does not supersede, his adoption of Palestine as Islamist homeland. Palestine trumps the U.S. in the generalized stigmatization of the U.S. as a second Israel, and though retained as a maternal figure and partially adoptive homeland, the relationship turns ugly, with the Oedipal consummation less the loving result of having made the father irrelevant than a coarse, penetrative thrust that inverts the Oedipal progression. Instead of the death of the father preceding the consummate Oedipal act, the penetrated mother is an intermediary on the path to the murdered father. The very overabundance of maternal homeland necessitates the discard of one of the homelands prior to the death of the father, and as Palestine is closest to the heart of the Islamist, it is preserved to the detriment of the U.S. maternal homeland, compromising one mother while preserving another. The U.S. therefore serves as a provisional homeland for the globalized citizen subject to deterritorialization within the U.S. global state, a temporary home away from home (or rather at home, given the pervasive U.S. presence via the global state) until one’s true home may be rehabilitated.
The Egyptian Preference

It is no mistake that Atta originates in Egypt, as Egypt is the preferred locale of key al Qaeda military agents; what is unusual, or perhaps unexpected, is the location of this preference within the Oedipal adoration of the mother. Given the distinctly male nature of the al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist formation, basing preference on the mother indicates an attention to the maternal homeland, as well as the viability of the maternal as a paternal substitute via inversion (as will be discussed in the conclusion). As noted by informant Jamal al-Fadl, “bin Laden seemed to favor Saudis and Egyptians, who occupied plum command posts and were paid higher salaries, more than Muslims from other backgrounds” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 165). The inclusion of Saudi Arabia in this preference may be attributed to its status as bin Laden’s homeland of youth, as well as the territorial location of the two holiest sites of Islam (Mecca and Medina), but the selection of Egypt requires further explanation. Even in the time of Moses, the Moses of Freud’s Moses and Monotheism (and a Moses influenced as much by Freud as by history), Egypt is compromised; after the death of Ikhnaton, Moses “had lost his native country” due to his beliefs (1947, 39). Instead, Moses “conceiv[es] the plan of founding a new empire, of finding a new people, to whom he could give the religion that Egypt disdained,” a situation similar to that confronting Atta in the budding days of his Islamist faith (39). Egypt, once the original motherland and homeland, the ur-civilization and cradle of life on Earth is, in the face of modernity, found wanting; its leaders straddle the line between the Muslim faith and the globalized American commercial faith of modernity, in the process creating that line/border as the locus of the emergent Islamist tangential military state in its midst. This modernity, characterized by advances in technology and knowledge which both liberalize and relativize
most, if not all, core beliefs, destabilizing the ancient foundations of Egyptian culture, creates a weakness in the maternal homeland that must be countered by its military agents.

Essential to the reassertion of Egypt’s vitality, and therefore an early Moses of sorts in his desire to spread the Islamist faith disdained by secular Egyptian leadership (and an inspiration to later Moses Mohamed Atta), is Sayyid Qutb, “[b]orn to a lower-middle-class family in a village in Upper Egypt,” and the chief ideologue of resurgent Islamism (1997, 209). His writings address the dangerous modernism being exported by the globalizing efforts of the U.S. military state, calling for jihad as the (re)formational gesture of the Middle Eastern and specifically Egyptian military state and the means of redeeming the Muslim world from its descent into pseudo-secular faith. The combination of Egypt as the ur-civilization of humanity, as well as the homeland of Moses, an important figure in the Muslim faith, along with its production of Sayyid Qutb and his ideology’s creation of Egypt as an early proving ground of the Islamist cause, makes the nation-“state” as a whole an attractive adoptive homeland and ideological/mythological touchstone. The Egyptian military state is even more attractive as one of the key methodological touchstones, yielding Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, al Qaeda military state second in command Ayman al Zawahiri, and Mohamed Atta. Egypt thus stands as an ideological and cultural touchstone for the al Qaeda military state, a microcosm of the larger struggle and a factory for key ideologues within the military state.

III. Imperialism

The combination of deterritorialization, and its production of the divergent nation-“state” and military state, along with the necessary mobility and territorial absentia of that military state, can result in only one end: imperialism. Thankfully, the U.S. military state, for one, has no qualms about taking on the imperialist mantle (see Hawaii or any number of U.S. territories), an
assumption that is rendered problematic by previous encounters with imperialism on the part of the nascent U.S. military state. In reference to Libeskind’s desire to erect a Freedom Tower reaching 1776 feet in elevation, collaborating architect David Childs remarks “1776! That’s a horrible date. To me 1776 is a declaration of war,” illuminating the prior experience of the U.S. on the receiving end of British imperialism, an unpleasant experience to say the least (quoted in Libeskind 2004, 248). Using 1776 in this manner also speaks to a desire for renewed unilateral self-definition, a doubled independence not only from Britain, but from everyone. Despite this firsthand, albeit considerably dated, experience with the downside of imperialism, U.S. Defense Secretary (and therefore chief official of the military state) Donald Rumsfeld is non-plussed, baring his own imperial ambition in the directive to “Go massive… Sweep it all up. Things related, and not” (quoted in Thompson 2004, 317). This directive illustrates not only the trademark largesse of the imperial venture, but also its all-encompassing nature, here including even unrelated things such as unfinished business in Iraq, energy needs, and anyone else who may happen to find themselves underfoot.

Rumsfeld is not content with merely establishing and/or reestablishing American empire in the wake of September 11 (hegemonic imperialism existing beforehand in relatively veiled form), but also ensuring its continuity, and to that end “sponsor[s] a study of ancient empires – Macedonia, Rome, the Mongols – to figure out how they maintained dominance” (quoted in Thompson 2004, 337). A knee-jerk reaction to respond, with excessive force, to an attack on the U.S. nation-“state” after September 11 is perhaps vaguely understandable, though the U.S. military state is aware that the deterritorialized nature of its al Qaeda foe would make such a large scale attack inefficient and wholly ineffectual; a jerk reaction to consult with prior imperial ventures and to act in kind, with full knowledge of the pratfalls and ultimate fate of those
empires, is not. The utter lack of concern for ramifications internal and external (the two being relatively coincident in the globalized world) implies a patent misperception of the terms of the dialogue. More aptly, the lack of concern implies a finely tuned perception concluding that, with the military states now in the open in the interactive “war on terror” between the U.S. and al Qaeda military states, long cherished imperial aims (as formulated by the Project for a New American Century) may be seized with appropriate vigor.

However, the al Qaeda military state is far from immune to imperialist ideologies, if not imperialist ends. Malise Ruthven quotes W. Montgomery Watt’s assertion that “[w]hen the disparate tribes of Arabia were consolidated into a single, massive and basically united sociopolitical group, the tremendous energy that had previously been expended in tribal feuds, raids, and attempts at dominating other groups could no longer be released” (quoted in 2002, 51-2). The only possible release was “outward, against the outsider” (52). This phenomenon is evident not only in the U.S. military state following the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and globalization, but also, as stated by Watt, in the Islamist world after the formation of Saudi Arabia, as well as after the synthesis of unfriendly Islamist groups under the al Qaeda military state banner. Yousef’s critique, though certainly valid in some respects, therefore operates from a tenuous position of near hypocrisy, saved from full hypocrisy by the nature of that external action. For al Qaeda, it is an effort at empire regained, the restoration of the Caliphate, while for the U.S., it is an effort of empire and remains, a full scale domination with few exceptions. Imperialism is therefore the domain of the al Qaeda military state and the U.S. military state, both of whom construct their imperialist efforts in self-defensive terms, though the U.S. imperial effort takes on a distinctly preemptive slant.
Border as Skin

Permeability is a primary concern of empire. Any point of access to the imperial innards indicates a point of weakness contradicting the gesture of domination literalized by imperial expansion, making the continuity and maintenance of boundaries essential to the homeland. Didier Anzieu meditates at length on the idea of the skin as the border between the approved internal and the reproved external, a concept directly relevant to the compromised imperial U.S. military state. The U.S. is what Anzieu calls “a ‘borderline’ state… suffering from an absence of borders or limits… uncertain of the frontiers… between what belongs to the self and what to others… confuses pleasant experiences with painful ones, and cannot distinguish between drives, which leads him [sic] to experience the manifestation of a drive not as desire but as violence” (1989, 7). As a “spectator of something which is and at the same time is not his own existence,” the imperial U.S. military state is unable to operate in the borderless globalized world without violence, which it perceives as being separate from itself, the domain of the Other (7). Even with Rumsfeld’s consultation of historical imperial forbears, the U.S. military state cannot “’learn from experience,’ … represent that experience to themselves and derive a new perspective from it… [and] they fear penetration,” but is rather relegated to cycles of repetition tied to the need for a perfect defense to prevent the permeability implied by penetration (24).

In response to this proclivity towards permeability, this inability to avoid penetration, the skin defense of the imperial U.S. military state seeks “modes or channels for getting inside a thing or of expelling something from inside to the outside,” best embodied by the PATRIOT Act (31). The skin defense is beset upon by innumerable outside entities, operating in a borderless realm yet desiring an integrity of border such that permeability is a non-issue (which, in essence, it becomes in the globalized world, entities always already having permeated in the act of simply
existing), unable to learn from prior attempts at impermeability and their inevitable failure, and actively seeking methods of exclusion. As a result, the skin defense of the imperial U.S. military state is, much to its dismay, quite permeable despite its efforts to magnify the habitual territorial location of the nation-“state” (as separate from the globalized U.S.) as a locus of PATRIOT Act control and successful exclusion. With so many available points of permeation (essentially, anyone with a dime and a dream may enter, without the dime), it is not a question of if the skin defense of the imperial U.S. military state will be breached, merely when and how.

The al Qaeda military state has entered, is entering, and will likely continue to enter the imperial U.S. military state which, despite its skin defense, is as permeable as the loose immigration of the U.S. nation-“state”; the question of how it does so is immensely more relevant, and reveals a litany of poor decisions. Anzieu identifies the skin defense as a “Moebius-strip structure: just as the outside becomes an inside which again becomes an outside, and so on, so the badly contained content [contenu] becomes a container [contenant] which contains badly” (125). Globalized beyond any sense of boundary, the imperial U.S. military state is simultaneously within and without borders, badly containing the undesirable imperialized Other to the point that the imperialized al Qaeda military state begins to contain the U.S. military state badly, its dictates not jiving with the ideals of the U.S. nation-“state.” Borders, as barriers to contact between the internal, homeland mother and the external Other, are subject to problematization by the contained quantities of the ever-expanding globalized sphere: “There is a limit to their resistance. They are temporarily, or even permanently, abolished by the irruption of large quantities” (78). Under this formulation, permeations of small consequence, of few deaths and low visibility, are of little concern, meriting cursory attention as permeations but little else, like the embassy bombings and the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole.
Distance is also a factor, with far off and therefore less visible permeations being tolerated, if not accepted. However, when a large quantity appears, such as the numerous attacks and substantial loss of life on September 11, contact barriers are rendered useless, temporarily abolished by the mass of globalization, and permanently abolished by the visibility given to that abolition on September 11. Within imperialism, a distancing affect appears between the colonies and the mainland, between far off permeations and those nearby, a separation that nearly disconnects the imperialized from the imperialist, a “suppression of this common skin and the recognition that each has his or her own skin... a recognition that does not come without resistance and pain. It is at this point that... [the] murderous skin exert[s] [its] influence” (63).

Extended to the breaking point, the skin defense becomes itself tangential to the globalized world, absorbing the al Qaeda military state in the process and essentially allowing al Qaeda to inhabit the American skin before its military agents even enter the habitual territorial bounds of the nation—“state,” placing the murderous permeation of the U.S. skin defense not from without to within, but rather from within to without, spurring skin failure. The skin, as an innately permeable border, reveals its flaws in the course of the globalization effort, as that which is within the global skin is always already there, and cannot be expelled.

**The Return of the Repressed**

Coming from within the expanded skin of globalization, the action of the al Qaeda military state is less an attack from without than the return of the repressed\(^\text{18}\) from within the global conscious of the imperial U.S. military state. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Lacan defines the repressed “not [as] the represented of desire, the signification, but the representative (le représentant) – I translated literally – of the representation (de la représentation),” pointing to the mode of repression applied to the al Qaeda
Other (1981, 217). Given the expansive inclusiveness of globalization under the exclusive domain of the imperial U.S. military state, any notion of a citizen within the global “state,” especially a military agent as Other, is not a presentation of the reality of globalization, but rather a representation, an alteration of the fact to suit the hegemonic agenda. Al Qaeda, then, is a representative, a delegate from the imperialized entering into pseudo-dialogue with the imperialist. The return of the repressed is typically an unsolicited and unwanted reemergence of an Other repressed so as to prevent its repetition (and inflammation of the desire of the One for its forbidden exoticism), though for September 11, the reemergence is solicited in an apocalyptic vision typical of the return of the repressed. Once the imperial U.S. military state has globalized, has expanded to the limits of its skin and of the globe, it has nowhere left to go but in, to repeat its expansion after an appropriately dramatic apocalypse, the end all to the globalized world’s be all.

The selection of an apocalyptic end to the imperialist venture is no mistake either, apocalypse having clear religious referents that yield a twofold dilemma. First, by virtue of having created such a dominant imperial military state, the notion of an apocalyptic end to the U.S. effort implies a degree of divine election, of God sneering down on a poor imitation of omniscience and knocking it down a peg. Second, “[w]here once it was religion that dominated culture and society… today in the era of global commerce and McWorld’s cultural homogeneity, it is increasingly the believers who feel imperiled,” doubling the election of apocalypse while also adding an underdog spirit, a sense of persecution in which religion thrives (Barber 2003, 187). Return may not even be an apt word; the al Qaeda military state never really left, since its mobility makes territorial residency an impossibility, and as its existence postdates U.S. globalization, a more accurate phrasing might be the repression of return. The simple act of
return is an act of repetition, in the case of the U.S. military state a compulsive solicitation of the return of the repressed that allows it to rehearse the later global apocalypse in a localized version on September 11. Without non-globalized space to return from, the repressed may only return to where it already is, the everywhere and nowhere of globalization.

The Drive

Any return, especially that of the repressed, necessitates a motivating drive, an impetus to push the repressed into self-representation, and the al Qaeda military state is no different. Discussing the return of the repressed, Lacan returns to Freud: “Freud says that it is important to distinguish four terms in the drive: Drang, thrust; Quelle, the source; Objekt, the object; Ziel, the aim,” outlining a ready scheme of identification for the workings of the September 11 plot (1981, 162). First, there is the thrust, a fundamentally necessary duty to avenge those who would compromise the possibility of a Muslim nation-“state,” or possibly even the return of the Caliphate, through the imperial U.S. military state and the desire to stretch its skin over everyone. Second, there is the source, a small cadre of likeminded Islamists composing the al Qaeda military state, themselves the adoptive citizens of the sole total military state, the systematically deterritorialized Palestine. Third, there is the object, the imaginary loci of the U.S. nation-“state,” the World Trade Center and its mythology of the free market, as well as the incidental mythological heartland of rural Pennsylvania, and the seat of the U.S. military state, the Pentagon. Fourth, there is the aim, to make the U.S. military state visible to the world it created via the collapse of the mythology beneath the U.S. nation-“state.”

If unable to seek and secure its initial aim, in the greater or lesser sense, “sublimation is the satisfaction of the drive with a change of object, that is, without repression” (Lacan 1992, 293). In this case the sublimation of the perhaps more obvious targeting of the Capitol Building
as locus of global legislation in favor of the more sublime, though incidental, target of the Pennsylvania heartland also targets the foundational mythology beneath the U.S. nation—“state,” without repressing the death instinct vital to the literal and figurative impact of the plot. Lacan considers it “a paradoxical fact that the drive is able to find its aim elsewhere than in that which is its aim,” pointing perhaps to a difficulty within operation in the globalized world (110). As nothing escapes the purview of the imperial U.S. military state and its global analogue, so too may nothing escape the aim of the return of the repressed; apocalypse is not a localized phenomenon, and as the global skin contains the globe, perhaps the aim of the drive need have no aim. “Terrorism,” if that in fact is what occurred on September 11 (a somewhat questionable assertion given the U.S. tendency to favor definitions privilege its own actions and demonize nearly all others, where strict definitions may grant 9/11 as asymmetrical warfare), need not even be performed or completed to generate its desired end, fear, making the simple act of return coupling with drive aim enough to suit the needs of the imperialized against the imperialist U.S. military state. The drive therefore serves as a means through which the return of the repressed may be enacted, and also allows for alternative targets, further facilitating the return. With the representational nature of the repressed seen in Lacan, the return may be performed by the final level of representation, the individual.

**Individual Heroism.**

In a paradox of sorts, the actions of globalized construction and implosion, dealing principally with the singular collectivity of the globalized world, produce narratives of individual heroism. For the U.S. military state, this heroism is mostly consistent with its unilateral worldview; for the al Qaeda military state, this heroism befits its status as (practically speaking) one against many. Michael Parenti quotes Benito Mussolini’s assertion that “a man must be ‘a
husband, a father and a soldier,’” establishing the generalized terms of heroism: privileged masculinity and dominion over the feminized Other, a sense of generational responsibility and continuity similar to Rumsfeld’s imperial continuity, and a militaristic concern concurrent with the notion of the military state (quoted in 2004, 35). Interestingly, it is the jihadis, Ramzi Yousef and Mohamed Atta, who fit this rubric of heroism best, while the U.S. military state falls notably short. Yousef, a married man, satisfies the other criteria as well: “He was fully prepared, even willing, to take violent action in support of his beliefs. For many militants, that made him a seductive character” (quoted in Reeve 1999, 64). A soldier, and a generationally responsible one at that, Yousef fits the bill. Atta too fulfills the criteria; though not a husband, he maintains a relationship despite the necessity of cover in the U.S., engages in actions consistent with membership in the al Qaeda military state and, most importantly, “has become a hero and an inspiration to the next generation of Islamic terrorists,” much like Yousef was to him a scarce few years before (Coombes and O’Connor 2002).

On the other hand, when limiting the examination strictly to the U.S. military state, thereby excluding emergency responders (part of the mythology of eternal life and only provisional military agents), the state falls short of Mussolini’s criteria. This failing is seen most powerfully in the statement of Deena Burnett, wife of Flight 93 passenger Tom Burnett: “If it had been my decision to choose between my husband and a thousand people at the White House, my husband would be sitting on this sofa” (quoted in Longman 2002, 248). Burnett’s statement offers an interesting counternarrative to the mythologized heroism of the U.S. nation—“state,” calling into question the implicitly higher value of those within the military state, like White House or Capitol staff, as opposed to the collateral citizen, rendering the heroism of the U.S. military state a simple gesture of imperialistic self-preservation, the sacrifice of the collateral
citizen for the military agent. The al Qaeda military state practices the opposite, the sacrifice of the military agent for the collateral citizen, with the ultimate aim of erasing the homeland/battlefield distinction and rendering all military agents until globalization fails, returning the possibility of the civilian agent. In terms of individual heroism, as outlined by Mussolini, the al Qaeda military state outperforms the U.S. military state in all aspects.

The Homeland/Battlefield Distinction

The erasure of the homeland/battlefield distinction, the necessary precursor to globalized disintegration and the return of the citizen agent, appears briefly within the U.S. nation-“state” on September 11, though its subsequent externalization extinguishes the brief moment of possibility it produces. Jere Longman calls the struggle aboard Flight 93 “the first battle in the new war against terrorism,” with a twofold result; first, the creation of the airliner as a space of military conflict erases the homeland/battlefield distinction, opening the possibility of globalized disintegration; and second, with the airliner as a space of military conflict, the passengers become military agents instead of collateral citizens, making September 11 once and for all an act of conventional war, not “terrorism,” as no civilians are involved (2002, ix). Charles Pellegrino reaches a similar conclusion, noting that “the Towers, like Gettysburg, were a battlefield, that day. There were no civilians” (2004, 416). By creating a pluralized battlefield in the erasure of the homeland/battlefield distinction, the battlefield-as-abject is pluralized also, a pluralization mimicked by the hijackers’ preparations: “After the hijackings, United flight attendants would report having seen Middle Eastern men knocking on the cockpit door of several flights before September 11, as if they had mistaken the cockpit for the bathroom” (Longman 2002, 209). Marking, be it through association with excreta in the above example, or the linguistics of de Certeau’s walkers in “Walking in the City,” where “[t]he walking of passers-by
offers a series of turns (tours) and detours that can be compared to ‘turns of phrase’ or ‘stylistic figures,’” making the walked patterns a means of unconsciously marking the unwalked plaza of the World Trade Center as a venue of intervention by the “terrorist” unconscious, is a means of erasure as well, abjectifying the mythical homeland as nation-“state,” specifically the U.S. nation-“state,” to the point where it becomes a battlefield as well (1988, 100). This erasure appears briefly on September 11, most notably on Flight 93, but also in the jumpers, punishing the plaza for marking the towers as targets in a fashion befitting the kamikaze pilots of World War Two and that day. However, it just as swiftly disappears, with the battlefield being exported outside of the sacred, neo-holy space of the U.S. homeland, with a fury that suggests the courting of, and subsequent capitalization upon, victimhood with extreme aggression. The neo-imperialist efforts of the U.S. military state prior to September 11 are unsuccessful in their attempts to secure an adoptive homeland for the U.S. nation-“state,” necessitating a reformatted imperialist effort that requires only a triggering event to set it in motion. With the erasure of the distinction between homeland and battlefield, the new imperialist effort may apply force baldly under the guise of securing the nebulous homeland.

IV. Aggressive Victimhood

Aggressive victimhood may be defined as the intentional courting of a traumatic event by the preparation of a willful, targeted vulnerability such that, once the event has occurred, a posture of victimhood may be assumed that renders every action thereafter one of self-defense, allowing the “victim” carte blanche to pursue the motivating objectives behind their willful vulnerability. Though appearing superficially as mere revenge, the difference between aggressive victimhood and revenge may be best illustrated through two examples drawn from the life of Mohamed Atta. When living in Venice, Florida during the preparations for September 11,
Atta had a girlfriend, Amanda, and upon learning of her affection for another man, Atta snuck into her apartment in her absence and mutilated her new kittens, leaving “[t]he mother cat… dead… [and] little baby cat parts all over the place” (quoted in Hopsicker 2004, 36). Conversely, and more famously, Atta, after months, perhaps years of planning, likely piloted American Airlines Flight 11 into the North Tower of the World Trade Center on September 11, partially in response to his own inability to succeed within the limitations of a fallen Egypt, and partially in response to the sufferings of his adopted Palestine. The former example is one of simple revenge, not a deliberately courted, willful vulnerability, but rather an incidental, unwanted vulnerability for Amanda, allowing the pursuit not of prior desires, but rather a momentary, elemental fury indicative of revenge; the latter example creates the Middle East, specifically Afghanistan and Iraq, as the victimized nation-“state”’s subjected to the hegemonic brutality of the U.S. military state in the post-September 11 response, which enables the further pursuit of jihad as constituted from the earliest days of the Islamist resurgence (only now with much better recruiting).

In Écrits, Lacan discusses the unsaid, in this case the unapproved speech of the analysand, identifying it as a “wager, a wager that we understand him [sic] [the analysand/Other] and then wait until a return makes us both winners,” and ultimately outlining the problematic nature of aggressive victimhood (1997, 93). One may seek out an event, cultivate it through, in the case of the U.S. military state, aberrant foreign policy or, in the case of the al Qaeda military state, the varied operations leading up to and including September 11, with a certain return in mind, either an attack allowing the flowering of PNAC or the flowering of jihad. However, one may not fully dictate the return, especially in a situation of dual courtship like September 11; where the U.S. military state expected and got its attack, allowing the gradual realization of the
aims of PNAC, the al Qaeda military state expected and got its unilateral military response from the U.S. military state. For the al Qaeda military state, this response allowed the realization of a bulging roster of jihadis, while also drawing the U.S. military state out into the open from beneath its obscuring nation-“state,” revealing the divergent values of the two entities to the horror of the latter.

Implied within the structure of aggressive victimhood is a desire to fight, be it in the literal or figurative realm, but only so long as the fight is controlled, channeled, and external to the “victimized” military state, a reinstatement of the skin defense after its approved permeation that preserves faux victimhood by directing criticism outward. Reflecting on his failed run for office in 1978, George W. Bush vows that “if someone attacks me, I will never again fail to fight back,” speaking specifically of the smear campaign that brought him down, but also establishing a willingness to fight after the necessary impetus of attack, courted or otherwise (1999, 175). The Bush Doctrine of preemption begins here, in the wake of his 1978 loss, which puts him on permanent offensive, a position ideal for effectively cultivating aggressive victimhood. Once prepared for the fight, the military state must enable its own assumption of a posture of victimhood through “transference… to restore the continuity of history” (Lacan 1981, 143). This transference attributes any and all counter-victimized moments in the prior operation of the military state outward through transference, repeating those historical moments while also sanitizing them to the benefit of the newly spotless military state.

After cleansing and externalizing historical misdeeds, the Other itself must be externalized beyond the bound of the prepared skin defense (an impossibility in the globalized world, yielding a hypothetical Other rather than the true al Qaeda Other, thereby accounting for the miscalculated return). Freud’s statement in Civilization and Its Discontents foreshadows the
military state performance: “The advantage which a comparatively small cultural group offers of allowing the instinct an outlet in the form of hostility against intruders is not to be despised” (1961, 61). With the externalized enemy as an approved channel for resolution of the sublimated death instinct-as-aggressive instinct, the previously external Other as included in the globalized imperial U.S. military state (and therefore essentially internal) is transformed, as perceived by Freud in “The Case of Schreber”: “The person who is now hated and feared for being a persecutor was at one time loved and honored” (1962, 41). Normally, this swift transformation of the Other from exotic market to toxic marked would be unsettling to observers within the nation-“state” (though its observation would be limited by the naturalized channel of external aggression); however, after the historical narrative (itself originally a construction) is cleansed, the genre of attack incurred in the victimizing event cannot possibly be the product of the military state, a whitewash that extends to the field of linguistics.

Before the linguistic operation of the aggressive victimhood phenomenon is to be examined, a further clarification of the process of converting the globalized Other as provisional U.S. nation-“state” citizen to the naturalized, targeted Other of the approved channel of external aggression is necessary.19 This clarification reveals the first pure unveiling of the U.S. military state to the world at large, as well as that of the al Qaeda military state. Here, the implicit devaluation of the imperialized under the scope of globalization via the invasive U.S. military state and its permeation of the centralized nation-“state”s of the globalized world is inverted into the devaluation of the U.S. military state and its accordant nation-“state,” justifying aggression in the approved channel of external aggression. By making that aggression external, the U.S. military state is performing a magnification, a reduction of the all-encompassing global to the universalized local of New York City. The al Qaeda military state performs a similar
magnification on the revelation that Islamist Islam is not the world (as perceived via George W. Bush’s crusade language), a reduction of the global to the universalized presence of accepted Islam a potential site of *jihadi* radicalization.

For the military states, these reductions and magnifications illustrate an understanding of the relative impossibility of size in the globalized world (though the U.S. military state operates with impunity in this fictive global space, knowing that its nation-“state” believes it so and will support actions to that end), an understanding wholly absent from the nation-“state”s, especially the U.S. In his discussion of the Rat Man in “Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis,” Freud notes the inversion necessary to aggressive victimhood, where “[t]he whole process then passed into the obsessional patient’s consciousness accompanied by the most violent affect and *in a reverse order* - the punitive command coming first, and the mention of the guilty outburst afterwards” (1962, 188). This inversion privileges outward aggression over self-examination, a privileging indicative of the inability of the nation-“state” to achieve self-awareness outside of the naturalized channel of aggression, ultimately ignoring the true impetus in its midst, the military state. Especially in the U.S. nation-“state,” with its myth of democratic rule prior to and above military force, this inversion is less an inversion than the status quo, a normalization evident in the linguistic turns embodied in the literal words of George W. Bush and the ideological phraseology beneath the U.S. military state.

The linguistic operations of the phenomenon of aggressive victimhood render the internal cultivation of the victimizing event and its historical context external, and intend to keep them there to preserve the naturalized channel of external aggression. To see a more general example of how these operations manifest themselves, one may look to Libeskind’s paraphrasing of the famous Theodor Adorno quote, where “Adorno said that anyone who takes a neutral view of the
Holocaust, who is able and willing to discuss it in statistical terms, is taking the position of the Nazis” (2004, 82). Adorno offers critique as a tool against fascism, so long as it is not neutral, insisting on a volatile, political language operating at little to no remove from the event, thereby broadening critique of the naturalized channel of aggression by revalidating all language not conducive to its perpetuation. This phenomenon is also identified by Laurence A. Rickels in Nazi Psychoanalysis – Volume I: Only Psychoanalysis Won the War: “In the 1990’s a cutting-edge industry of grief studies crowded the corridors of academe with the injunction to mourn or be forever fascist” (2002, 30). This linguistic operation counters preemptive measures, concerned with the erasure of the tools of critique before a critique may even be formulated.

Conversely, George W. Bush echoes this tendency to preemption: “If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge” (quoted in Thompson 2004, 339). Bush perpetuates the naturalized channel of aggression and its external location by discussing preemption as an act taken to the enemy, implying the externalization of the magnified city-as-state, while also referencing the temporal inversion of Freud’s privileging of punishment before guilt in the Rat Man. His statement also provides a clear reference to Iraq and the search for weapons of mass destruction, a specific instance of the greater phenomenon of dematerialization in the globalized sphere. As the state becomes less a material, territorial entity than a fictive ideological space (the nation-“state”) or a mobile, aggressive locality (the military state), preemption requires not the actual material, but only the suggestion of the material. The mere possibility of an Other beyond the skin defense of the globalized world (where else could it be? Not inside…) is all that is necessary to spur the magnification of the universal city and the
exchange of massive immobility for a smaller, more useful kind of massed mobility in the military state.

Exchanging the untenable, immobile globalized world for a more effective, mobile military state, or rather the privileging of the military state by, and later apart from, the U.S. nation-“state,” approximates an equality of discourse. However, the U.S. military state, in its internalization of efficacious portions of the ideology of its territorially internal nation-“state,” is not showing all of its cards, preferring definition and exchange on its own pseudo-discursive terms. The idea of September 11 as a potlatch, a ceremonial destruction of good to discipline desire, is not lost on Jean Baudrillard, who deems it “a symbolic calculation… with minimum stakes, but the maximum result.” (2003, 22) What results is a bargain of sorts much like the wager of aggressive victimhood and the anticipated return. Potlatch,21 in Baudrillard’s terms, applies to both the U.S. and al Qaeda military states, existing for the former, at least prior to the “war on terror,” as the ability to undertake small, covert pinprick actions at minimal cost to preserve hegemony, an ability lost in the supercession of the U.S. nation-“state” by the U.S. military state. For the latter, potlatch exists as the ability, with insignificant funding and personnel, to force the magnification and regression of the globalized world, while also regenerating via the recruiting boom that follows.

If the operation of this potlatch, this minimal exchange of the lives of a few military agents for the Life of agency for the military state, is not covert enough in its location within the military state-as-minute subset of the nation-“state,” then it may be further obscured under the guise of natural disaster. Pellegrino extends the linguistic performance of preemption into the realm of exchange, observing that “volcanologists were drawn to the crater in Manhattan” (2004, 389). Here, September 11 is not a willfully courted event of victimization, not a calculated
exchange of three thousand lives for world hegemony and the visible emergence of the U.S. military state via the potlatch, but rather an unexpected, uncontrollable event subject to study after the fact, but not resulting from study before. That return is even a possibility in the natural disaster scenario is problematic, though feasible. Given the characterization of the hijackers as fanatical holy warriors, their action is a natural disaster of sorts, perpetuated by God through his 

\textit{jihadi} vessels, thereby making a return action against Islamist elements, specifically the al Qaeda military state, possible. A natural disaster therefore becomes a naturalized disaster subject to the channel of external aggression, an aggression that often takes on frightening dimensions.

Force, justified by the naturalized channel of aggression and formalized in the construction of the military state and its participation in the potlatch, comes to make use of the \textit{carte blanche} made available by aggressive victimhood, and facilitates compounded victimhood and the preservation of homeland. Libeskind anticipates the viability of force in his “Holy Truth in Rough,” saying that “[t]he knife becomes an ethical item when the roof of a hotel reverberates with an unexpected howl at midnight” (1996, 94). Libeskind anticipates September 11 and the commercial rental space of the World Trade Center shuddering with the (disingenuously) unexpected roar of the al Qaeda military state at the zero hour of the attacks.\textsuperscript{22}

Once claimed as the domain of the victimized, force is assumed to be valid, combining the globalizing fervor of the U.S. military state before and after September 11 to preserve “the resort back into a narrower sense of national victimization should the world spurn its advances” (Wood 2005, 36). This resort takes on the form of the magnification of the universal city that follows victimization of the evangelical military state. Ultimately, magnification is an attempt to preserve a parcel of the homeland, for the U.S. military state its territorial nation-“state” as a subset of the globalized world, for the al Qaeda military state a Muslim nation-“state” as a subset
of the Caliphate, daughters to the mothers of the pre-magnification homelands. If the U.S.
military state’s “plan is to penetrate the flesh of our girls,” as theorized by a Hamas leader during
the Gulf War, then defense of homeland is the preservation of the maternal successor in the
daughter (and also of the Electra complex therein) (quoted in Emerson 2002, 97). By preserving
the daughter, the military agent may restore the already compromised maternal homeland, albeit
only upon maturity of the daughter. Along with the preservation of the daughter(land), force
also preserves the religion of the magnified homeland. For the U.S. military state, this is
commerce, whose primacy is evident in the indictment language focusing on acts “where the
results… would have affected interstate and foreign commerce,” an overall ethic of return and
response that operates with the pretense of defense while securing a means of offense (Venzke

The defensive posture of response to the solicited victimizing event within aggressive
victimhood is disingenuous at best, though when assumed by the al Qaeda military state as a
mirror of the U.S. military state, the posture mimics that of the U.S., revealing U.S. hypocrisy in
the process. In Superpatriotism, Michael Parenti quotes Osama bin Laden’s assertion that “[t]his
is a defensive Jihad. We want to defend our people and the territory we control. This is why I
said that if we do not get security, the Americans will not be secure either” (quoted in 2004,
146). Bin Laden demonstrates the externalization of aggression onto the U.S. military state, an
understanding of the deterritorialized nature of the military state, and also of the potlatch of
insecurity. Instead of mere aggression, which would be more overt and would not necessitate the
solicitation of the event, or simple passive aggression and its pattern of provocation, weakness,
and response, the U.S. military state (and, by proxy, the al Qaeda military state) practice a form
of active passive aggression. More clearly termed aggressive victimhood, the phenomenon
replaces the milder form of provocation with a deliberate solicitation. Where passive aggression typically doesn’t involve harm to the object of aggression, aggressive victimhood does in its hyperbolic passivity, an overperformed passivity that quickly changes to aggression after the event. Bin Laden’s mimicry of the U.S. posture of victimhood is problematic for the U.S. military state, as it cannot have a “terrorist” Other practicing its methods and thereby invalidating them, while also making the Other seem not so very Other in its approximation (or rather perfection) of approved methodologies. Rather than the profound differences implied by the imperialist-imperialized dichotomy within the globalized world, “Jihad and McWorld are the two sides of the same coin, Jihad is already McJihad,” an al Qaeda military state mimicry of U.S. military state methodology makes that methodology visible in ways it was not before (Žižek 2002, 146). Once visible, the U.S. military state in essence calls attention to its own fraudulent stigmatization of the cellular, eliminating its own critical position.

For the channel of external aggression to become naturalized, the external Other must be highly visible, and is usually rendered so by essentializing some characteristic. Through this necessary visibility, many other attributes of the Other are also visible, including its mimicry of the U.S. military state, making visible the covert methodologies therein and endangering the monopolistic hold that military agency has over the collateral citizenry.23 Since the visibility of this mimicry is enabled by the defensive posture of the al Qaeda military state, itself enabled by the cultivated victimizing event (preceded by motivating events), the newly or potentially aware collateral citizen must accept “violence as the price to be paid for peeling off the deceptive layers of reality” (Žižek 2002, 6). As force is justified within the naturalized channel of external aggression, a performative utterance that brings about the hegemonic implications of the ideology of the U.S. nation-“state,” so too must it then be justified, though certainly not desired
or approved, as a medium of visibility for the realization of U.S. military state methodologies. This justification yields a denaturalized channel of internal examination foreign to the realm of aggressive victimhood. Rather than a defensive posture, the al Qaeda military state’s preparation for the solicited victimizing event takes on the form of offense, not only in the solicitation of the event via September 11, but also in its anticipation of the second wave ideological implications.

The moment of potential realization of U.S. military state methodologies would, if ignored, eventually disappear from a lack of confirmation by the U.S. military state in its subsequent actions. However, efforts to attend to and eliminate that potential realization draw attention to it, extending its influence and destabilizing the very foundation of the U.S. military state. In the course of allowing the solicited victimizing event, the skin defense is rendered temporarily permeable in a supervised manner, then swiftly mended: “The holes are thus plugged by a film of images which are, essentially, visual” (Anzieu 1989, 214). Plugging the holes is a film of images of a tragic patriotism, of a nation-“state” stirred into action by victimization, best exemplified by the helplessness of the jumpers representing a nation-“state” and military state that, rather than soliciting the event, has it thrust upon them from without. Seemingly, this plugging of the holes in the skin defense is a temporary action, a provisional healing of the skin defense in lieu of a later, genuine healing (or scarring). However, as Lacan contends, “the gesture is always present,” in contrast to the temporal limitation of the act, making the initial plugging as a literal stopgap measure now one of perpetual plugging (1981, 115). As such, the skin defense never heals, and the film of images is all that holds out the Other, a situation beneficial to al Qaeda.

With the perpetual visibility of September 11 in the film of images, the U.S. military state reminds its collateral citizenry of their peril, justifying its imperial agenda. Yet, with the
perpetual visibility, the al Qaeda military state remains a constant, its inclusion in the visual stopgaps the preservation of those gaps for access at will, nullifying the magnification of the universal city-as-defense by simply transforming the Other within to the mobile Other within and without. Able to operate from all angles, the al Qaeda military state may “[d]estroy, destroy… Oedipus, the illusion of the ego, the puppet of the superego, guilt, the law, castration,” and therefore greatly complicate the Oedipal superstructure on which the military state is made (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 311). For the U.S. military state, mother America-as-nation-“state” has already been penetrated by adoptive son the al Qaeda military state, also father in its necessitating a mobile military agent to protect the mother. Here, the father and Other is inside of the mother, making a (m)Other immune to the entreaties of the son who, rather than killing the father, facilitates his longevity by allowing his penetration of the mother. Aggressive victimhood therefore operates as a process of self-victimization, externalization, and stigmatized visibility brought about by linguistic and militaristic methods. The death instinct, externalized into the imperialist aggressive instinct of aggressive victimhood, must now return if the son is to continue.

The Aggressive/Death Instinct

Aggressive victimhood operates in a realm of externalization, directing energies to the external Other as facilitated by historical cleansing and linguistic control, a similar externalization to that performed by the death instinct in its transformation to the aggressive instinct. The latter is the practice of the U.S. military state, and the former the practice of the al Qaeda military state. Freud examines the duality of the aggressive/death instinct, settling on the importance of both: “Neither of these instincts is any less essential than the other; the phenomena of life arise from the operation of both together, whether acting in concert or in opposition”
(1959, 281). Freud establishes the interaction of the two instincts, which are not only not independent of each other, but also not pure strains in either case: “Some portion of the death instinct, however, remains operative within the living being” (282). Given the questionable singularity of either instinct, the eventual division of the U.S. and al Qaeda military states along the instinctual division is suspiciously exact, at least superficially. This exactness is qualified by the perpetually permeated skin defense of the U.S. military state, which yields an al Qaeda military state always both within and outside of the U.S. military state, and a U.S. military state always surrounding/surrounded by the al Qaeda military state.

Despite the ambiguity, each state has its instinct of primary relevance, for al Qaeda, a “restriction of this aggressiveness outwards… bound to increase the self-destruction,” (Freud 1961, 66) and for the U.S. military state an aggression best illustrated by George W. Bush’s statement that “if this is the game they want to play, then we’ll play it” in reference to his 1994 gubernatorial campaign (quoted in Hatfield 2001, 129). The statement from George W. Bush exemplifies aggressive victimhood, with the terms of discourse purportedly being defined from without, as well as the notion of play, implying a joyful simplicity only present in solicited trauma, in all cases illustrating a distinct externalization of the death instinct as the first action of the Oedipal phenomenon. Conversely, the statement, drawn from Freud but representative of the al Qaeda military state, exemplifies the state of the imperialized in the globalized world, where the relative impossibility of return (prior to the realization of military agency) turns aggression inwards, though not to self-destructive ends. Rather than simply destroying itself, the al Qaeda military state, specifically a handful of its agents, turns destruction into a means of aggression, melding the instincts in the Freudian fashion so as to render suicide not an end, but a means to an end of defense.
**Suicide as Defense**

Suicide as a means of individualized defense\(^{24}\) is not a new phenomenon, though small multiple suicides as an act of trans- or a- national salvation are perhaps more unusual, as is the case on September 11. The mass suicide at Masada in 73 C.E. may be considered such a defense in its preservation of the Zealots and their associated salvation as God’s elect. More contemporary examples include the May 1945 suicide of 900 people in Germany before the arrival of the Red Army, the 1973 suicide of 913 followers of Jim Jones in Guyana, and the 1997 Heaven’s Gate suicide of 39 in San Diego, California. These contemporary examples illustrate a more individualized suicidal form, centered around progressively smaller groups of people. Lacan concludes that “the defense or the mutilation that is proper to man does not occur only at the level of substitution, displacement or metaphor… [h]uman defense takes place by means of something that has a name” (1992, 73). Lacan establishes not only mutilation as a means of defense, but also mutilation as a means of gaining agency, that agency being the means by which human defense takes place. Suicide here is a deliberate form of self-mutilation, an externalization of the internal psychic scars and hysteria intended in Lacan’s description that courts death as a means of drawing attention to suffering in life (either the life of Palestine or the flawed neo-imperialist efforts).

For the U.S. military state, defense, as practiced by imperialistic foreign policy, is a form of suicide, a negation of the self engendered by an attempt at asserting global agency beyond the simple agency of the territorial nation-“state” in the pre-military state period. This suicide is performed by the actions of the internalized (via globalized accession and the produced victimizing event as facilitated by the temporarily and ultimately permanently permeable skin defense) al Qaeda military state. It is the folly of globalization that creates this suicidal state by
allowing the al Qaeda military state to become internal to the U.S. military state, making what is seemingly an external action an internal one. For the al Qaeda military state, suicide, as practiced by the hijackers-as-military agents, is a form of defense, an assertion of the self engendered by the seizure of military agency from the jaws of collateral citizenry. This suicide is performed by the actions of the externalized (via imperialist Othering and its status as produced victimizer as facilitated by aggressive victimhood) al Qaeda military agent, the ultimate performance of death as life. Where globalization acts as a superficially inclusive gesture, the al Qaeda military agent is still external to the globalizing agenda of the U.S. global state, and in that sense attacks from without from within.

Baudrillard agrees, saying that the hijackers “have succeeded in turning their own deaths into an absolute weapon against a system that operates on the basis of the exclusion of death, a system whose ideal is an ideal of zero deaths” (2003, 16). The exclusion of death in favor of aggression makes the U.S. military state, in all of its technologized glory, highly vulnerable to the use or infliction of death. The hijackers then become “popular heroes capable, like the scientific hero, of destroying themselves by flouting any prohibition, any limit, any law,” further cementing their capability in the field of individual heroism, where the U.S. military state so notably fails (Virilio 2002, 23). As defense, suicide doubles the already problematic infliction of death within a zero death system, incurring death not only in the towers and the passenger seats, but also the cockpit, a suicidal gesture that serves to reveal the double. The double is the suicidal global state whose very overextension internalizes the suicidal military agent, once without and now within, and makes the suicide of the hijacker the suicide of the U.S. military state, with the pair linked so closely as to make the death of the Other, in a neat and certainly anticipatable way for the al Qaeda military state, the death of the globalized One.
The death of the Other via suicide while the Other resides in and is therefore a part of the One yields September 11 as, appropriately, the suicide of the West, and a failed one at that. Slavoj Žižek mentions, in a discussion of Russian identity, the term “vojla, the more metaphysically charged absolute drive to follow one’s will right up to self-destruction,” a term of great relevance to the issue of suicide (2002, 80). As September 11 illustrates, the hijackers certainly have the will to follow their desires up to self-destruction and, via their permeation and inhabitation, are prepared to drag the West right along with them. That the West has in fact facilitated this collective suicide with its own suicidal foreign policy, the result of which is the deliberate and calculated opening of the skin defense so as to allow the solicited victimizing event to take place and the capitalization upon that opening by the al Qaeda military state, is not lost on the al Qaeda military state, though it is certainly lost on the U.S. military state.

Baudrillard offers a diagnosis that cuts to the root of the U.S. military state misapprehension: “The West, in the position of God (divine omnipotence and absolute moral legitimacy), has become suicidal, and declared war on itself” (2003, 7). It is here that perhaps the most embarrassing aspect of the event of September 11 resides, in the notion of internal and external largely erased by globalization, then brought back by the use of magnification within the realm of aggressive victimhood.

By declaring war on “terror,” the U.S. military state is in essence declaring war on itself, both as agent of “terror” via reliance on military force as a performative utterance, as well as the internalized al Qaeda military state let through the skin defense, making September 11 and everything after an internal struggle. Al Qaeda deliberately constructs this self-declaration of war by the U.S., as it allows a relatively small, non-state actor to destabilize a larger global power without having to do much of the work, simply starting the implosion, then swooping in to
feast on the ruins. On the other hand, the al Qaeda military state, present both inside of and outside of both the globalized imperial U.S. military state (as global resident and hypothetical external Other) and the magnified aggressive victimized state, is involved in struggle that is perpetually outside of itself (while also simultaneously inside). What results is a U.S. military state that, in undertaking an exclusively internal struggle, is involved in an internal *jihad*, the lesser of the two forms, while the al Qaeda military state, in undertaking a partially external struggle, is involved in an external *jihad*, the greater of the two forms, making the U.S. military state a failure on its own (internalized al Qaeda) terms. Suicide becomes a weapon that may be wielded externally (by the hijackers) or internally (by the suicidal U.S. global state). The asymmetry involved, between a mobile yet static large U.S. military state, and a mobile and kinetic small al Qaeda military state, is repeated throughout the event of September 11, as illustrated above and below.

**Asymmetry**

Asymmetries abound on September 11, be they the asymmetry of force versus symbolism, the spiritual versus the material, or any permutation therein, all of which lay the groundwork for the architectural asymmetries to follow in the work of Daniel Libeskind. Aside from perhaps the lone pure symmetry available on September 11, Baudrillard’s thought that the towers’ “destruction itself respected the symmetry… a double attack, separated by a few minutes interval, with a sense of suspense between the two impacts” (2003, 42). The double attack is itself asymmetrical in the different impact points, angles, and trajectories, and no other symmetry exists on September 11. Those who consider the attacks “blowback” for prior misdeeds of foreign policy may in fact be correct, though the differing scale of September 11 and any motivating events spoils the potential symmetry of this contention. Instead of being met by
equivalent and thus symmetrical force, the imperialist thrust of the U.S. military state and its
technological dominance “cannot operate on the terrain of the symbolic challenge and death – a
thing of which it no longer has any idea, since it has erased it from its own culture” (Baudrillard
2003, 15). This thrust creates an asymmetry between the symbolic thrust of the al Qaeda
military state and the imperialist force of the U.S. military state before, during, and after
September 11.

True, the al Qaeda military state does operate through force, the visceral impact of the
planes serving as a performative utterance of sorts; however, the immediate transposition of
those images into the film of images that fills the breaches within the skin defense pulls the
action squarely into the realm of the symbolic, despite the efforts towards hyperpersonalization
seen in the New York Times victim biography series and countless books. Symbolism was in fact
the aim of al Qaeda, claims of mass death undermined by the timing of the attacks when the
towers would be at best half full. The imbalance of literal U.S. military state force versus
symbolic al Qaeda military state force is counterbalanced by the asymmetry of material and
spiritual weaponry, as characterized by one jihadi: “To fight the jets and bombs, we have
something called human bombs. It’s a different kind of balance of power” (quoted in Davis
2003, 143). Where the U.S. military state offers the material weaponry of an air assault, the al
Qaeda military state offers the spiritual weaponry of the suicide hijacking-as-air assault, a
rupture of the understanding of zero death warfare by zero life warfare that tips the overall
balance to even. The balance may tilt slightly in favor of the al Qaeda military state, as the U.S.
military state lacks in devotion what it holds in munitions. These terms are understood and
operated upon by both states.
High-ranking military agents from both the U.S. and al Qaeda military states comprehend the asymmetries of their interaction, accepting them and ultimately reinscribing them in through the architecture of Daniel Libeskind. Craig Unger discusses increased attention to Osama bin Laden during the Clinton administration, observing that “[w]ith bin Laden in the saddle, no longer were terrorists dependent on state sponsors. In Sudan, and later in Afghanistan, it was he who helped out the government financially – not the other way around” (2004, 174). This statement contains a number of implied asymmetries, most notably that of the deterritorialized nature of the military state itself in opposition to prior regimes of state-sponsored military action. Unger’s statement also implies the inversion of the state-agent dynamic, where military agents who once operated at the behest of states now form their own military states only occasionally allied with nation-“state”s, and also the purely physical asymmetry of bin Laden himself, a tall, lanky dialysis patient among younger, well-trained and healthy military agents. For bin Laden, war is no longer a matter of states, recognized formal declarations, and uniformed troops; it is instead a matter of military states, fatwas whose non-recognition only hardens their issuers, and military agents who, like the adoptive Palestinian fellow citizens, are indistinguishable from civilians because civilians do not exist.

CIA Director George Tenet engages bin Laden on these terms, saying “[w]e must now enter a new phase in our effort against bin Laden… each day we all acknowledge that retaliation is inevitable and that its scope may be far larger than we have previously experienced… We are at war” in relative response to bin Laden’s fatwa of 1998 (quoted in Thompson 2004, 77). Tenet concedes that what will take place, perhaps even what he wants to take place on September 11 as a solicited victimizing event, will be retaliation, and that it is war, not “terrorism,” that is occurring, noting also the potential asymmetry of the attacks to come to what has come before.
Both bin Laden and Tenet understand the terms, understand each other, and accept the asymmetries with full knowledge that, when things are out of balance, self-correction to equilibrium is inevitable. Daniel Libeskind comprehends the first inevitability, the presence of asymmetry in a globalized world, and embraces it; the second, self-correction, indirectly eludes him, leading to the reinscription of impossibility in his Freedom Tower, as will be shown below. Asymmetry exists as the terms and method of interaction between the al Qaeda military state and the U.S. military state, operating at a balance of sorts between the material and the symbolic with full acknowledgement by key ideologues from each side. With the terms of aggression in place, all that remains is for each military state to demonstrate its capabilities in action.

The Demonstration Effect

Aggression is relatively useless unless it may be demonstrated, and both the U.S. and al Qaeda military states offer demonstrations\textsuperscript{25} that, unfortunately, also exist as sites of misapprehension. Terry McDermott analyzes the Afghan war of the 1980’s and identifies the effort as the \textit{jihadi} demonstration: “led by Ayman al-Zawahiri, Peshawar Egyptians saw Afghanistan not as an end in itself but as a sort of demonstration project, an experiment to see if a ragtag Muslim army could defeat the most sophisticated of military opponents” (2005, 156). Unfortunately, while sponsoring the \textit{mujahideen} covertly, the U.S. military state does not realize the capacity of the future al Qaeda military state displayed against the Soviet Union, and relies on force and technology in the face of spiritual dominance. Ellen Meiksins Wood performs a similar analysis of the Afghan war beginning in 2001, and identifies the effort as the U.S. military state demonstration: “[T]he object of military force is indeed exemplary terror… the ‘demonstration effect,’… the main purpose of the war in Afghanistan, [is] designed to spread fear throughout the region and beyond” (2003, 167). Equally unfortunately, after failing to
realize the power of faith exhibited by the pre-al Qaeda mujahideen in the 1980’s, the U.S. military state exhibits an unflagging faith in power in late 2001, despite the fall of the Soviet Union and the World Trade Center. Demonstration thus serves as a testing range for new military state ideologies and practices, the dry run serving as a warning and perhaps even spurring a preemptive cessation of opposing actions in light of the specter of potential defeat.

Homeland, expanded beyond recognition by globalization (a pregnancy of sorts in its spatial expansion and absorption of the genetic material of other nation-“state”s), thereby internalizes all, including the Other (which it attempts to project as the hypothetical Other), allowing an attack to occur from within. Though this attack is in fact solicited, the military state then magnifies its universal city as a preservationist action, an action ultimately undermined by the very phenomenon of aggressive victimhood that produces the solicited event. After the pregnancy of globalization, the birthed Other is not fully expelled from the mother. The Other retains rights of permeability through the prepared skin defense, and therefore exists not only as “terrorist” father, but also globalized brother of the U.S. military state as son, inciting the bastardization of the family romance through the naturalized channel of external aggression.

Unable to rid itself of this Other, yet equally unable to realize the Other’s presence within itself, the U.S. military state attacks the Other in an ultimately suicidal action, inscribing the asymmetries of force versus symbolism and material versus spiritual into not only the ruined discourse of September 11, but also into its final demonstration, the architectural creation of Daniel Libeskind’s Freedom Tower.


The Oedipal homeland is a point original to this thesis, and refers to the maternal homeland within the larger revised Oedipus complex necessitated by September 11. Partner to the Founding Father, the maternal homeland represents the locus of enactment for the ideological tenets of the Founding Father, the cultivation of which results in the U.S. military state son. As an actor within the initial Oedipal triad, the maternal homeland implies a fixed locality, a territorial locus wherein trademark American notions of an expansive (and empty) landmass, abundant resources, and the freedom/liberty to partake in both up to an at times beyond the destiny of the American people are performed.

Though Žižek uses this “desert of the real” in the title of his text Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates (New York: Verso, 2002), it is Baudrillard who coins the phrase, thus the joint attribution.


As Maududi puts it, the “state” is essentially irrelevant in the ideological field, and only achieves relevance through its forceful reinsertion (or insertion of force) into the deterritorialized field of the military states, a deliberate effort to reconstitute the “state” where only the state exists (Laqueur 2004, 400). Deleuze and Guattari draw an apt quote from Kafka’s “The Great Wall of China” (New York: Penguin, 2005) to articulate the situation: “In some way that is incomprehensible to me they have pushed right into the capital, although it is a long way from the frontier. At any rate, here they are; it seems that every morning there are more of them… Speech with the nomads is impossible. They do not know our own language” (quoted in Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 195). As in Kafka, the “they,” al Qaeda, have pushed into the capital, in this case the national capital Washington D.C. and the world capital New York City, despite their distance from the tangential frontier of the military state; as in Kafka, al Qaeda is here, in cells sleepy and not so sleepy, which multiply like the viruses to which they are so often compared; as in Kafka, speech with the mobile military state is impossible, on the terms of U.S. pseudo-dialogics, though not for Kafka’s reason. Rather than not knowing the language of the U.S. homeland, the pseudo-dialogue of force, al Qaeda knows it all too well; if anyone does not know their own language, it is the fictive U.S. “state” of the homeland and its related citizen, for the military state, creator of that language, speaks it fluently. With the revelation of the fictive “state” and the actual military state in place, the machinations of that “state” achieve a degree of clarity both unprecedented in its vision and frightening in its implications, an absence of a common language or understanding beyond the bounds of the individualized communities of belief.

9 *Lebensraum* is typically associated with the Holocaust, and most texts addressing the concept are found in Holocaust studies, including Götze Aly’s “Final Solution”; Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews (Trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Martyn Housden’s *Hans Frank, Lebensraum, and the Final Solution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). However, some texts branch out from that specific quest for *Lebensraum* to approach the phenomenon more generally, including Ayse Öncü and Petra Weyland’s Space, Culture, and Power: New Identities in Globalizing Cities (Atlantic Highlands: Zed Books, 1997) and Ingrid Rimland’s Lebensraum: The Theft of Land and Peace (Toronto: Samisdat Publishers, Ltd., 1998), though the latter’s presence on a press known for Holocaust denial problematizes its value.


11 The globalized citizen is the citizen who has been rendered “state”less. This “state”lessness results in a global citizenship that is at once freeing and disorienting, a transnational identity that jars when read against the distinctly territorial citizenship provided by the nation-“state,” creating a sense of dislocation that results in the relocating efforts of the adoptive homeland. The globalized citizen appears prominently in Sigmund Freud’s Civilization and its Discontents (Trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), where the relationship between neighbors is predicated on a problematic compulsory love, and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s Empire (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), where the citizen is globalized by the confluence of technology and global economics.


14 One may look to the current situation in the wake of Hamas’ election victory as an example of the total military status of Palestine. Though ultimately “state”less in the absence of the true Palestinian state as envisioned by Islamists, Palestine achieves status as a total military state in that very “state”lessness, allowing it supreme mobility among pseudo-“state” actors. As the story is evolving daily, it is difficult to point to specific sources to confirm this contention, though a cursory glance at the Editorial page of *The New York Times* or listen to National Public Radio will reveal the depth of concern over and identification of Palestine as a total military state.

15 Through its inclusion in the initial Oedipal triad, the maternal homeland becomes the maternal fetish object, either through a distinct desire to enhance its territorial largesse (in the case of the U.S. military state) or a similar desire to regain and/or solidify the territory of a contested homeland subject to periodic dispossession (in the case of the al Qaeda military state and its adoptive homeland, Palestine, as well as the larger desire for a Muslim state). As the maternal fetish object, its borders expanding to enclose any and all who desire it beneath the national skin, resulting in a hyperbolic state characterized by diasporic presence in a diffuse, cellular form. The maternal fetish object receives extensive attention in Jacques Lacan’s “The signification of the phallus” from *Écrits: A Selection* (Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1977. 281-91).


17 Texts addressing imperialism are many, though for the purposes of this argument, five in particular are of great value: Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), Derek Gregory’s *The Colonial
The practice of torture serves to keep localized and off-scene the chronic state of emergency that, in effect, haunts the state, action in the "war on terror." Santner's emphasis on all institutions insofar as they are dependent on the reality effects of performative utterances – utterances that bring sublimation beneath the operation of the U.S. global consciousness. Upon its return, or rather its emergence through linguistic avenues, the al Qaeda military state manages to literally re-press its representation, moving from a metaphorical devaluation to an iconicographic inhabitation so profound as to make national vocabularies nearly unusable without also including references to the al Qaeda military state, thereby revising its depiction in all forms of media. A similar formulation of the return of the repressed appears in Dominick LaCapra's Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

Freud succinctly anatomizes the transformation in reference to Schreber, saying that “the proposition ‘I hate him’ becomes transformed by projection into another one: ‘He hates (persecutes) me,’ which will justify me in hating him” (63) in “Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoïdès)” found in The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XII (1911-1913) (James Strachey, ed. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press Limited, 1962: 3-82).

The Rat Man is the subject of Freud’s “Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis” from The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume X (1909) (James Strachey, ed. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press Limited, 1962: 153-249). In this case, the patient has obsessional thoughts about a particular punishment mentioned to him by a military officer involving a rat eating away part of one’s body, and also about his guilt over having wished his father dead. Stuart Schneiderman offers an interesting treatment of the case in his Rat Man (New York: New York University Press, 1986) as well.


With the knife validated, the limits of its use are a concern, a concern shared by Santner in My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber’s Secret History of Modernity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996): “[T]he practice of torture serves to keep localized and off-scene the chronic state of emergency that, in effect, haunts all institutions insofar as they are dependent on the reality effects of performative utterances – utterances that bring about the propositional content of the social facts they pretend merely to certify” (1996, 43). Santner’s emphasis on torture as the limit of force, as well as the locus of the realization that law is in fact merely force, links closely with the state of emergency that is the military state, necessitating constant motion and, in the case of the U.S. military state, action in the “war on terror.”

Though the Cold War is also characterized by a similar confluence of mimicry, silence, and imagination of the Other, that confluence is largely a static event, save a handful of low intensity conflicts (with the notable exception being the Afghan conflict). In the case of al Qaeda, covert methodologies are made visible not through the static (and even then, well after the fact), but rather through the kinetic event of action and response, where the stalemate is replaced by the duel. As the Cold War paces are completed, the Called War (as a solicited action) duelists turn and face each other.

Suicide as defense constitutes a preemptive act of self-nullification, an elimination that preserves agency in the ownership of one’s own destruction. This methodology acts against the zero-death philosophy of conflict, offering...
in return a zero-life equation in which death devalues death at first simply by virtue of its decentralization as a unique event (deaths naturally being exceedingly rare in the zero-death philosophy), removing it from the realm of the exceptional. Death then revalues death as a position of ideological integrity in the face of the relativistic ethos necessary to maintain life at all costs. Therefore, the destruction of self, be it through the suicide hijacking of an airliner or a foreign policy stance, precedes and predicts the fate of the ideological counterpart, al Qaeda’s hijackers following and preceding the suicidal policy decisions of the U.S. military state and their detrimental effect on the maternal homeland and collateral citizenry therein. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak similarly addresses suicide as defense in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” from Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman’s *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. 66-111).

25 The demonstration effect stands as the pre-global operation of the cellular capability, in essence serving much the same purpose as the film trailer: to entice the (global) audience to acknowledge the intrigue of the upcoming event which, by virtue of its presence in the (global) theatre, is certain and impending. For the al Qaeda military state, its pre-formation victory in the Afghan war of the 1980’s demonstrates its capacity for cellular action in the fluid battlefield, the constituent elements of the state coming together in the form of training camps, monetary channels, and covert operation experience. For the U.S. military state, its intercession in Afghanistan in late 2001 demonstrates its new preemptive global agenda, a reformatted globalization in which “states” are de- and reconstructed at the whim of a handful of ideologues, a misguided nation-building praxis that forms only (military) states, not nation-“states.”
2. “Preparation”¹: architecture

I think you should build the towers back, but next time don’t tell anyone where they are.²

-Pellegrino, *Ghosts of Vesuvius: A New Look at the Last Days of Pompeii, How Towers Fall, and Other Strange Connections*

**The Libeskindian Bind**

As the selected architect for the World Trade Center site rebuilding project, Daniel Libeskind is placed in an untenable ideological position where his well-intentioned efforts to tastefully and respectfully rebuild on the site are, for lack of a better word, hijacked by the U.S. military state and its fictive ideologies. Outside the context of the fictive ideologies, Libeskind’s Freedom Tower is an effective, if unremarkable, rebuilding effort whose ideological groundings in Libeskind’s own personal philosophy are at worst eclectic, at best inspiring. However, in the context of the fictive ideologies, Libeskind’s nebulous formulations (addressed to large, abstract ideas and thus extremely prone to being co-opted) are transformed by their association with the U.S. military state, rendering the project less a spiritual treatment of the event than a neo-imperial treatment. Libeskind is thus placed in a position where application of his personal philosophy is self-negating, that philosophy being necessarily coopted and corrupted by the U.S. military state association. What results is a condition of impossibility, where Libeskind’s personal success is a public failure, and the closer he comes to achieving his vision, the closer the project comes to achieving the reformatted globalized vision of the U.S. military state. Unintentionally, and perhaps unknowingly, Libeskind builds not (or not only) his Freedom Tower, but also that of the U.S. military state, revealing the impossibility of anything but unilateral reassertion in the current climate of pseudo-dialogue within the operation of the U.S.
military state. That Libeskind tries to achieve his vision is respectable; that he ultimately fails is unavoidable.

I. Space

The definition of space within the architectural realm inhabited either by the U.S. military state and its monumentalist aim of reasserting imperial dominance, or the al Qaeda military state and its subversionist aim of revealing the U.S. military state through parodic action, is of crucial importance to the constitution of that realm as a zone of force, whether singular or plural. Daniel Libeskind offers some useful words on the subject in, appropriately, “The End of Space” in *The Space of Encounter*, discussing “the fact that space as such is a myth – the idea that there is a space and we all have access to it… there is no space, there are spaces… [s]pace is not one, but space is plural, space is a plurality, a heterogeneity, a difference” (2000, 68). Libeskind therefore understands space as not the singular, universal entity of the imperialist U.S. global state and its consumptive, shared space, but rather space in possession of and constructed by difference, a series of individualized spaces constituted by their occupants.

Troublingly, Libeskind approaches the logic of Samuel P. Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” in his concession of spaces within the context of the U.S. military state, allowing no provision for zones of interaction and discourse, merely a differentiated yet plural space where all are separate but under one roof, that of the U.S. military state.³ In “… endless space(s)” from *The Space of Encounter*, Libeskind clarifies one aspect of this space, “[t]he divine(d) field: made and fallen spaces,” (2000, 65) creating the World Trade Center site specifically as a divine space in its status as both made and fallen, one of the “[s]paces miraculously, unexpectedly, necessarily, light-dazzled, by the plurality of each, in the unique appropriation of all,” necessarily solicited by aggressive victimhood and appropriated by the al
Qaeda military state (65). The divine language of the made and fallen space, the space made by falling, like the visible gap in the skin defense hastily patched by the film of images, the rubble space of the al Qaeda military state-inhabited World Trade Center site, or the original World Trade Center plaza, reappears in Nobel, the plaza’s “icons distributed around a central open space… [which] might be seen to blithely mimic the arrangement of the holy places in Mecca” (2005, 38). As a divine field, made and fallen, the World Trade Center site is such a space as plural space(s), the site being inhabited by the al Qaeda military state prior to, during, and after the solicited event of September 11. The space is also concurrently inscribed in U.S. nation-“state” iconography and ideology before, during, and after the event via the same towers, rubble, and pending tower, becoming a dualized space that is, for each military state, simultaneously made (in its own image) and fallen (into the hands of the Other).

For space to exist (specifically the fictive raw space of the imperialist venture), it must be created by a razing action, a potentialization of previously realized space that renews imperialism in the hands of the U.S. military state, while undermining that imperialism in the hands of the al Qaeda military state. In *Up From Zero: Politics, Architecture, and the Rebuilding of New York*, Paul Goldberger identifies the problem posed to the World Trade Center site by the surrounding city: “The layout of the trade center embodied a planning theory that viewed the complex, disorderly form of the city mainly as a nuisance, a mess to be cleaned up and replaced with gleaming new abstract objects” (2004, 28). Razing here is a means of clearing out all of the rabble hampering the realization of the gleaming object, the imperialization of already realized space or spaces, heterogeneous pluralities, to create a singular space, all taking place within the microcosm of the city. Actually, the city is not so much a microcosm as the post-magnification performance site of the reformatted globalization project, the universal city-as-world capital and
seat of the imperial U.S. global state. Nobel cites a similar logic from Siegfried Giedion’s *Nine Points on Monumentality*, specifically the eighth point and its suggestion that “it would be necessary to raise entire quarters of cities to create ‘vast open spaces’ in which ‘monumental architecture will find its appropriate setting which does not now exist’” (quoted in 2005, 32). Razing here is not merely a potential means of dealing with a nuisance, but instead it is a necessity for the creation of monumentalizable space, with significant ramifications for the World Trade Center site.

First, Giedion’s razing may actually be an end in and of itself, a self-serving form of razing that creates space not necessarily for later use as the site of monumental structures, but rather as the site of a monument to space itself and its death in the realized imperial U.S. global state. Second, the event of September 11, as a razing event, implies the event as an architectural act as well, the further inclusion of the hijacker as master planner in the military agency of the imperial clearing event, though in this case a responsive act of deimperialization, a repressed pressed into service on the front lines of the de(con)struction of the World Trade Center site. While at once a monumental event, September 11 therefore becomes a monumentalizing event as well, the precursor razing of creation of space for the original plaza and towers finding a parallel in the event razing. The razing creates space within the skin defense, allowing renewed inhabitation of the site by the al Qaeda military state in the rubble, the monument, and the Freedom Tower.

Architecture’s constitution of space extends to its historical dimension as well, an extension that ultimately ends up organizing architecture around a void that erases the relationships of space and ignores the ramifications of that space. Daniel Libeskind captures the ahistorical nature of architecture in his “Unoriginal Signs,” saying that “Architecture is neither
on the inside nor the outside. It is not a given nor a physical fact. It has no History and it does
not follow Fate” (2004, 281). By virtue of its constitution in and organization around a void,
architecture is both inside of and outside of that void, and so neither inside nor outside. The void
created by architecture’s lack of history eliminates historical space, thereby organizing
architecture around where that historical space would have been, now a void, and removing the
impetus of the forced linear historical narrative. Without a linear narrative, the fated or predicted
action is deemphasized, and therefore permits agency in the seeking of certain architectural
results, such as the renewed unilateralism of the Freedom Tower. Libeskind offers a vision of
this organization in action in his Jewish Museum Berlin, “a new type of organisation which is
really organized around a centre which is not, the void, around what is not visible” (1992, 87).
Void is both an empty space as well as a meaningful, managed space. Rather than the simple
duality of spaces either empty or full, there is the space full of emptiness – the Jewish Museum
Berlin’s void for the experiences endured and never experienced by Berlin Jews, and the World
Trade Center/Freedom Tower’s void for the patent emptiness of its ideological underpinnings,
drawn from the U.S. nation-“state.”

Spatial relationships are thus brought into question; if the supposed somethingness of the
World Trade Center is revealed to be nothingness on September 11, then perhaps the nothingness
of the imperialized portion of the U.S. global state is actually a somethingness, a somethingness
with military agency at that. The somethingness of the World Trade Center is a void supported
by the actions of the U.S. military state (as revealed by the al Qaeda military state), while the
nothingness of the imperialized portion of the U.S. global state is later the external Other of the
magnified homeland of aggressive victimhood. Once more, Libeskind both grasps and
unintentionally reinscribes the problem. He is pointing to “[t]he invisible ground from which it
is possible to scaffold moving layers of construction” in “End Space,” yet he never articulates what occurs or has occurred on that visible ground (2004, 275). For the World Trade Center site, this sense of ahistorical construction without literal or figurative grounding is an elaborate scaffolding around the void, a framed nothing that mimics the empty ideological space of the U.S. nation-“state.” Rather than existing as a truly ahistorical architectural construction, the Freedom Tower ultimately constructs a fictive “history,” and is thus ahistorical not in its lack of creation, but its creation of lack. Space, once created through a razing action, becomes singular and is organized around a void in accordance with the dominant narrative of the U.S. military state.

**The Void**

The void, described often enough and with enough pseudo-sacred reverence in Libeskind to merit status as the Void, is the unilateral result of the global community collapsed by globalization, a verbalized, specified name for the nothing. In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Jonathan Safran Foer offers an interesting formulation of the Void in the “areas of the apartment… ‘Nothing Spaces’… nonexistent territories in the apartment in which one could temporarily cease to exist” (2005, 110). Foer’s nothing spaces are much like Libeskind’s Void. When actively produced, Libeskind’s Void is a nothingness containing (or at least suggesting) something, and when passively produced, is a somethingness, like the Freedom Tower, containing (or at least suggesting) nothing. Foer’s “Nothing Spaces” represent the collapse of the husband-wife dyad, a ruined community where space is produced by the razing of once occupied areas not at the literal, physical level, but rather at the ideological level. This internalization of emptiness mimics the Void’s centrality in the Jewish Museum Berlin
specifically, architecture more generally, and the nation-“state” surrounded by the border-as-tangential military state globally.

If the Void were to exist simply as it is passively produced in the Freedom Tower, it would be largely invisible to the collateral citizenry, realization of its presence necessitating military agency. However, Libeskind actively produces the Void. In *Breaking Ground* he defines “the presence of an overwhelming emptiness created when a community is wiped out, or individual freedom is stamped out; when the continuity of life is so brutally disrupted that the structure of life is forever torqued and transformed” found in both the Wedge of Light (since deleted from the design) and occasional space of luminous occupation, as well as the Freedom Tower itself (2004, 12). The Freedom Tower’s inverted largesse suggests not presence, but absence (filled). Libeskind’s premises are also tenuous concerning the World Trade Center site, since no community has been wiped out (the vocations of the tenants being relatively similar, but not drastically so), and individual freedom has been asserted rather than wiped out. The event is less a disruption than a rupture in the unexamination of the U.S. military state, although narrativization efforts favor its characterization as a brief disruption in the imperialist project. The notion of community arises from the fictive ideological tenet of the melting pot, made false by the relatively specific deaths of September 11. By simply naming this produced nothing, Libeskind attempts to establish dominion over it, though the word void/Void is, in Lacan’s terms in *Écrits*, “already a presence made of absence” (1977, 65). Libeskind’s effort to name the void Void is therefore simply a doubling of the nothing, an attempt at verbal specificity that only specifies the nebulosity of the void; its suggested presence-as-absence reveals Libeskind’s efforts to obscure the fact that it is not that the container contains nothing, but that the container does not contain.
Naming the Void serves in Libeskind as a means of endowing the absence, the nothing, with some sort of substance, a fairly benign effect when actively produced, considerably less benign in the case of the Freedom Tower. Deleuze and Guattari add to the inscription of meaning provided by the word-as-name by codifying that word into law, where “the law prohibits something that is perfectly fictitious in the order of desire or of the ‘instincts,’ so as to persuade its subjects that they had the intention corresponding to this fiction” (1992, 114-5). The prohibition endowed by naming the Void within the Freedom Tower is both a prohibition on the permeation and attack of the U.S. nation-“state,” a fictive entity whose permeation is not in fact prohibited, and even occasionally solicited, and a prohibition on the globalized, imperialized Other, no longer a relevant entity in light of the strategic magnification and externalization performed by the reformatted imperial U.S. military state in the course of achieving its U.S. global state. Instead of Libeskind’s intended prohibition on general violence and spiritual perversion, his intent is twisted to favor a more specific prohibition on the violence and spirituality of the Other. Here then, the Void is both nothing and something, “the only ground against which we can apprehend existence,” and a fictive reservoir of U.S. nation-“state” ideology and real refutation of the globalized, imperialized nothing as a something in the assertion of military agency, through inhabitation, by the al Qaeda military state (Baudrillard 2001, 8).

Mark C. Taylor remarks upon this duality in “Point of No Return” from Radix-Matrix, saying that “[c]reation by subtraction presents presence with absence,” making the al Qaeda military state’s creation of U.S. military state visibility through subtraction of the World Trade Center the presentation of presence, the U.S. military state as hegemonic agent of globalization, with absence (Libeskind 1997, 128). Absence here includes both the ideological emptiness of
the U.S. nation-“state” and the agency of the supposedly irrelevant global imperialized. The Void even appears in the physics of the World Trade Center collapse, where “[t]he core [of the collapse column] was near-perfect nothingness: not a single doorknob, or chair leg, or file cabinet” (Pellegrino 2004, 406). The collapse column is a profound absence that is both absence, the absence of a real referent for the fictive ideologies of the U.S. nation-“state,” and a presence, that of the agency of the al Qaeda military state. This Void is intentional in the Jewish Museum Berlin, and may therefore be managed to produce a specific meaning. In the Freedom Tower, though the Void is conceptualized beforehand, the Void that ultimately appears is a reinscription, a reconstruction of the Void of the original World Trade Center, and accordingly carries forward its empty ideology and al Qaeda inhabitation. Once perceived as empty, the Void becomes a space of memory, and in the process memorializes not only the event, but also its solicitation and solicited agent, the al Qaeda military state.

The memory flood that follows the perception of the Void as empty creates an urge to memorialization that longs for a something to embrace when greeted with the superficial nothing of the Void and, as a consequence, ends up embracing the solicited but largely unknown inhabitant, the al Qaeda military state. In “Nouvelles Impressions d’Architecture,” Libeskind runs through the stages of the memory flood: “The emptied locale floods the consciousness and strikes at the husk of memory. Thus drawn by an experience of spaceless-space, a realm opens up which is not visualizable, a region of invisible presence that refuses to be occupied by anything” (2000, 134). What emerges from these stages is an almost active Void, one seeming to possess agency that targets the memory hollowed out by the emptiness of the U.S. nation-“state” ideology, drawn by the deterritorialized mobility of the al Qaeda military state whose nominal invisibility as an inhabiting entity makes it an occupying nothing occupying the nothing
of the Void. The ability to make the nothing something, to make the Void less a reservoir for memory than an agent of memory creation, endows the inhabiting al Qaeda military state with a certain attractiveness, making it a likely site of inadvertent memory for those consulting the Void.

Freud’s discussion of love in “On Narcissism: An Introduction” does a fine job of laying the groundwork for a discussion of the memorializing transfer to the al Qaeda military state, where “the fulfillment of infantile conditions of love… [allow] whatever fulfills this condition of love [to become] idealized” (1957, 122). Essentially, one comes to the Void looking for something to memorialize, and finding absence, memorializes that absence as presence, without fully realizing that it is not absence that is being memorialized, but the absent present of the al Qaeda military agent stripped of initial agency through imperialism. The tangential al Qaeda military state thus comes to inhabit the centralized Void, to permeate the skin defense as solicited, and to remain after the magnification of aggressive victimhood, a similar situation provoking the following concern from Anzieu: “We are faced, then, with a paradox: the centre is situated at the periphery” (1989, 9). Now the al Qaeda military state is the center of attention both literally and figuratively, having been singled out as the focal point of the “war on terror” as waged through the approved channel of external aggression, as well as the unperceived center of the frantic efforts at memorialization. This urgency facilitates the continued al Qaeda military state inhabitation of American iconography through the reinscription of that iconography in the film of images, a doubling of concern that ends up fetishizing the al Qaeda military state, rather than the typically fetishized American motherland.

Addressing a Void inhabited by an al Qaeda military state rendered as one of Foer’s “Nothing Spaces” would seem to be a delicate task, but Libeskind wades into the fray with little
concern for formalities, an aimless approach that only serves to further entrench the al Qaeda military state inhabitant. At his most elliptical in “Holy Truth in Rough,” Libeskind offers the following epigram as a presaging of Peter Eisenman’s rebuilding proposal: “No anxiety when empty columns are rolled up swiftly to form a familiar if anonymous pattern resembling the rug” (1996, 95). Where Eisenman’s proposal concretizes the rolling debris cloud of the towers’ collapse in glass and metal, rendering the emergence of the al Qaeda military state perpetually visible in his own version of the rug of debris, Libeskind seems non-plussed by not only the collapse of the ideologically vacant towers (a fact he does note), but also by the possibility of al Qaeda military state visibility. At this point, he has no cause for concern, as his intent appears separate from that of the U.S. military state, if only from his perspective. In advocating a void in a discussion of memory after September 11, critic Leon Wieseltier asserts that “[a] void is a retort to the din”; however, Libeskind’s use of the Void seems less a retort to the din than an echo chamber, making the voice of the initially obscured al Qaeda military state more prominent with each reverberation (quoted in Goldberger 2004, 121).

Some, such as rebuilding contestants Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, believe that “it would be tragic to erase the erasure” (quoted in Nobel 2005, 13). On the contrary, Libeskind’s use of the Void, a production of formalized, managed emptiness where one kind of emptiness (ideological) always reigned and another (spatial) had just come into being, erases the erasure performed by the solicited event, only to reinscribe it with new, formal support in the Freedom Tower – the house that al Qaeda built. Libeskind’s erasure is, in his eyes, less a clearing of discourse than a clearing of emotional debris. In that sense it is effective prior to its perversion by the U.S. military state. Much like the strictly military sphere of approved external aggression, where “[t]he repudiation of the notion that military intervention must be clear and
achievable political goals speaks volumes,” Libeskind’s Void is aimless, space for the sake of space, an architectural American Lebensraum that produces (but cannot hold), raw space, thus opening the door to inhabitation by the imperialized Other (Wood 2003, 146). A final example of the unfocused production of space in the Void may be seen in the feeling that, “[e]ven if a skyscraper is not occupied in its upper reaches, it should at least have a towering ‘skyline element’” (Stephens 2004, 23). So long as the spatial requirements are satisfied, there is no concern if the highest seats (of government) are unoccupied (by qualified personnel). Libeskind’s inadvertent mishandling of the Void spurs its uncontrolled enlargement, creating a gap that dooms future generations to repetition of the solicited event.

By creating a Void, a formalized nothing, then attempting to endow it with a certain somethingness that is ultimately uncontrolled, Libeskind inadvertently inflates the Void, multiplying generational distancing from the solicited event and similarly multiplying the likelihood of its repetition. Discussing the problematic notion of filling emptiness in reference to the Alexanderplatz competition, Libeskind feels that “simply constructing many buildings and filling in the site did not necessarily diminish that emptiness. On the contrary, the filling of the emptiness might actually inflate it” (2003, 46). For the Freedom Tower, Libeskind’s necessary reinscription of the original ideological emptiness of the World Trade Center through its construction in the constituent ideological sphere perpetuates the Void beneath the fictive ideologies of the U.S. nation-“state.” The Void is then enlarged by his attempts to endow the space with a certain meaning, since it has already been inhabited by the al Qaeda military state as solicited by the U.S. military state. Too much formalized nothing, whether it is the ideological nothing of the U.S. nation-“state,” or the obscured something of the al Qaeda military state,
necessitates an inflated Void which, like the hot air inflating the imperial U.S. global state, will eventually cool and magnify to the territorial homeland, the universal city, and the tower.

Such an inflation of the Void generates a gap, “a gap which exists among those who are survivors, which includes everyone born after those times – a gap which becomes obliterated and which generates in itself an even greater emptiness in the posthistorical world.” (Libeskind 2003, 43) This gap, an initial emptiness created by the event, is obliterated by the Void and its dehistoricization of the solicited event in favor of the rehistoricized linear narrative of the victimized U.S. nation-“state,” spurring inflation and greater emptiness in the not posthistorical, but rather pro- (U.S. nation-“state”) historical world. In “Steinatem/Stonebreath,” Libeskind concedes the ultimate repetition inscribed in the Void, “a system inscribing its demise in what is visible,” pointing to the reinscription of American iconography in the Freedom Tower as the inscription of the Void on the building face, a visible external double to the internal Void of the U.S. nation-“state” bound by the tangential U.S. military state (2000, 160). This reinscription naturalizes the produced and managed Void of the solicited event of September 11, marking its spread, through the permeated skin defense, from the internal to the external, and thereby naturalizing the production and management of voids and Voids through repetition of solicited action(s). The Void, actively produced as a spatial nothing that implies somethingness, is flooded with memory, though it is the memory of the al Qaeda military state that ultimately inhabits the space. Libeskind’s filled Void inflates and pervades, much like the light he often mentions as its partner.

Light

Light’s essentiality to Libeskind’s constitution of space cannot be overestimated, its status as a pervasive, nearly imperialistic presence mimicking his own indirectly unilateral
forms, its intangibility mimicking his own deterritorializing instinct within the U.S. military state context, its divinity mimicking his own fundamentalist perspective on architecture. Musing on the nature of light in *Breaking Ground*, Libeskind outlines his approach to the matter in a series of rhetorical questions: “What an extraordinarily strange, powerful thing light is. Rays filled with hope. How do you talk about light without talking about the divine? About something that lies beyond the human? About perfection?” (2004, 53). This light is thus an agent of benevolent power, of a divine, omniscient, omnipotent force; in essence (no pun intended), God, or perhaps God’s earthly emissary, the fundamentalist military state. Libeskind’s concern with light pertains to not only what it does, its inspirational, supernatural presence in absence (much like the undefined presence in the absence of the Void), but also what it may do for him in his use of it in various architectural projects.

Light plays a central role in most of Libeskind’s architectural efforts, be it the scarce, slashing illumination provided by windows in his Felix Nussbaum Museum and Jewish Museum Berlin, specifically the seemingly sourceless light in the Holocaust Tower of the latter, or the pervasive, angular illumination of the asymmetrical glasswork of the Freedom Tower, and not without cause. By using light in a deft manner, Libeskind may invoke the status of, like Paolo Soleri’s memorial proposal, a “secular cathedral” (quoted in Stephens 2004, 170). While not specifically intended for religious purposes, Soleri’s “secular cathedral” mimics the monumental grandeur, space, and light of the cathedral as a holy space. Libeskind’s Freedom Tower then becomes a secular cathedral to the U.S. nation—“state” ideology of the unilateral, the imperialist through its U.S. military state context, rendered a church once more by the fundamentalist, “city on a hill” basis of much of that ideology. The tower piggybacks on the referentiality of light, becoming extraordinarily strange in its asymmetrics, powerful in its invasive brightness, divine
as a secular cathedral for a secularity directly informed by a conception of divinity, beyond the human in its existence as reflexive architectural memorialization and in its unilateral assertions, and perfect in its synthesis of the above into the pseudo-unchallengeable position of the hegemonic U.S. military state. Light, an agent of the divine, becomes an agent of the divine(d) space of Libeskind, the made and fallen space of his tower that, in its reinscriptions of U.S. nation-“state” ideologies within the U.S. military state context, includes light in the mix through the Wedge of Light.

Figure 7

The Wedge of Light (Figure 7), though ultimately removed from the site plan after a combination of buildings blocking its source light and the revelation of the falsity of its claim to capture light between 8:46 AM and 10:28 AM on September 11 (the times of first impact and final collapse) made it untenable, exemplifies Libeskind’s harnessing of the divine light to his own advantage. Libeskind “imagine[s] an even greater plaza [in Breaking Ground], a triangular area that would become lower Manhattan’s largest public space. I called it ‘The Wedge of Light,’ and it was inspired by the ray of sunlight that had made its way down to us as we toured
the bathtub back in October” (2004, 48). The plaza’s size evokes the razing necessary for its production, and its inspiration hints at Libeskind’s perception of light as divine. The triangular nature of Libeskind’s use of light recalls two diagrams from Lacan’s *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. The first details “three terms of optics used in this operational montage that bears witness to the inverted use of perspective” (Lacan 1981, 91-2), and the second two superimposed triangles, “the first… [of] which, in the geometrical field, puts in our place the subject of representation, and the second… [of] which turns *me* into a picture” (105). Lacan’s diagrams capture the inversion performed by the reassertion and reinscription of the divine in the Freedom Tower after its original form, the World Trade Center, has been permeated by the divine (to its detriment) and also light as a gaze, a divine gathered from without, focused without, and later returned by the divine al Qaeda military agent.\(^6\)

Light reinforces the exceptional redemptive effort being undertaken by the U.S. military state so as to preserve its obscuring nation-“state,” creating a closed dualism between the divine, Christian God and his [sic] divine agent, the U.S. military state. This dualism revokes the darkened death of the sarcophagus, blinds the readability of the solicited event, and obscures the building face as a site of al Qaeda inscription through the glare of the reflecting aluminum. Light aids the efforts towards monumentalism, ensconcing itself within the American iconographic sphere (and also being likewise inhabited by the divine al Qaeda military agent) and adding a presence to space that satisfies the absence of Libeskind’s Void, while also perpetuating its inhabitation and enabling its inflation. However, as in Baudrillard’s discussion of Hopper’s light, Libeskind’s light is “[a]n absolute light – photographic in the literal sense – demanding not to be looked at but, rather, that we close our eyes to it and the inner darkness it enfolds,” a light that, while pseudo-divine, only obscures with its brightness the darkness of the Void and its
empty ideologies beneath in a manner contained in (though not anticipated by) Libeskind's personal philosophy (2001, 142). Light becomes another imperialist element, its focus indicating election and its brilliance obscuring all critique.

II. Exceptional Redemption

Prior to Daniel Libeskind’s efforts, the original construction of the World Trade Center, illustrates the willful blinders hampering the vision of the U.S. military state. Lead architect of the World Trade Center Minoru Yamasaki identifies the towers as a “physical expression of the universal effect of men to seek and achieve world peace,” an admirable intention that ultimately goes unfulfilled in the reality of the brief existence of the World Trade Center (quoted in Nobel 2005, 25). What Yamasaki seems to see in his towers is a yearning verticality mimicking the reach for the ethical heights of equality in the effort towards peace, a dualism that inscribes the equality of nation-“state”s in that realm of world peace in the near identicality of North and South Towers (broken only by the communication antennas). The very naming of the towers omits the East-West dialectic inherent to the Orientalist-Occidentalist problematic (though reinscribing the divergence of North and South America, as well as the Northern and Southern Hemispheres), and the design establishes a common ground for the equal towers-as-nation-“state”s in the expanse of the plaza.

This conception of the intended symbolism of the towers, though poignant in its own nostalgic sort of way, is largely unrealistic, a realization that finds a useful theoretical referent in the Libeskind documentary “Daniel Libeskind: Welcome to the 21st Century.” In the film, while waxing philosophical about his Jewish Museum Berlin design, Libeskind notes that, although primarily about communicating the event of the Holocaust specifically and Jewish life in Berlin more generally, the design and its architecture are also about “the erased ground of relationships”
(“Daniel…” 2000). As seen in the World Trade Center plaza, itself the result of the erasure of four city blocks to create a superblock, as well as the intended symbolism of the original towers, the erased ground of relationships is not the rosy globalization implied by the equality of nation-“state”s and elimination of troubling dialectics. Rather, the erasure points to the more sinister globalization in which nation-“state”s are absorbed or abolished by the ever-enlarging U.S. nation-“state” and its operating force, the imperialist U.S. military state, leaving only opposing military states afloat in the midst of the bloated American hegemonic global state. The discourse available, if any, is the unilateral pseudo-discourse of the U.S. military state, “listening” to all and hearing only what it wants to hear, while the al Qaeda military state plots its next moves.

Present from the construction of the original towers, the impossible inscription of peace into the World Trade Center is necessarily and involuntarily repeated in Libeskind’s altered Center, a doubled impossibility with much room for (intentional) error. The act of repetition establishes Libeskind, selected by the U.S. military state to perpetuate the ideological fictions of the U.S. nation-“state,” as an exemplary (if unknowing) agent of that military state, making his missteps manifestations of those of the military state.

Instead of acting as a metaphorical site of peace and equality, the World Trade Center site becomes, in the event of September 11 and the rebuilding that follows, a site of penetration, necessitating the production of the new film of images to fill the gaps left by the supervised permeations of aggressive victimhood. The very act of rebuilding implies the plugging of a gap. Libeskind notes this in *Breaking Ground*, where he includes a telling passage from Emily Dickinson: “To fill a Gap / Insert the Thing that caused it – / Block it up / With Other – and ‘twill yawn the more – / You cannot solder an Abyss / With Air” (quoted in 2004, 44).

Libeskind, however, necessarily does just that, inserting an equally unilateral Freedom Tower in
place of the World Trade Center by virtue of its U.S. military state context. This insertion blocks the erasure which may have fomented discourse with another kind of erasure that, as the product of and container of the al Qaeda Other, yawned even wider before the removal of the rubble. Yet, the erasure is to be filled with Libeskind’s airy construction, a tissue of U.S. nation-“state” ideological fictions. Insertion, or rather penetration, thus dominates the World Trade Center site.

As the gap cannot appear to be persistent, the need for the new arises, “the “new” [as] a necessity of the mind, of the body,” or rather of minding the body of the U.S. military state made vulnerable by its own permitted permeation (“Daniel…” 2000). Such an unprecedented action as September 11 (or at least one widely viewed as such) requires an unprecedented or new return, an assertion of pseudo-democracy that simply reasserts the ideologies of the U.S. nation-“state,” though for an audience whose pressing need for meaning upon realization of globalization renders the ideas fresh.

For the new post-September 11 democracy to truly gain currency it must find a touch-point, an area where its vitality and viability may be widely observed, and there is no locale more fit for the job than architecture and the dualities of construction and destruction. Though not immediately a duality, the dialectic of construction and destruction is such that one contains the other, making the dialogue akin to that of the U.S. military state, which in talking to the Other talks only to itself. Charles Jencks, architecture critic, outlines the terms of democratic architecture as an act of “present[ing]… the unpresentable,” a making tangible of the ideals of the supposedly democratic global state, such democracy now being useful to ease the expenditures of a hyperactive U.S. military state that would have to attend to those who would not allow bases, flyovers and the like (“Daniel…” 2000). This reference to the unpresentable carries a subtle suggestion of divinity, a suggestion made less subtle by Libeskind’s statement
from *The Space of Encounter* that “this kind of architecture seeks not to approach the other by hiding the normal face in front of the supernatural… demands that human beings – in the absence of the supernatural – speak to the other without contempt (the so-called user) and without putting the other in servitude or to treat him as an object of functions” (2000, 23).

Libeskind offers a wordy way of laying claim to the foundational belief of Qutb’s Islam, the erasure of man’s dominion over man, which also appears in Christianity and Judaism. In the absence of God (though not the assumed non-existence), this democratic architecture insists on an unmasked equality where none are treated as means to an end, but rather as ends in themselves. Libeskind formalizes this assertion in *Breaking Ground*, concluding that “[w]hat is called for in the twenty-first century is a new philosophy for architecture, one based on democratic ideals,” and also implying that he is just the man to answer the call (2004, 43).

There is just one problem with the proposed democratization of architecture and the planning process, Libeskind’s statement in *Radix-Matrix* that “[t]oday everyone is a master, or no one. Either everyone will be the master builder of the city, or no one will” (1997, 160). The statement implies the inclusion of not only residents of New York City, lay architects from around the world, and various bureaucracies, but also the hijackers as master planners both of a “terrorist” plot and a plot of land, offering destruction as an act of creation. This is a concession that few would be likely to make. Again in *The Space of Encounter*, Libeskind discusses the line as limit and border, identifying “[a]rchitecture toward line… [as] equalizer of day and night – reaching to make equal,” pointing to the resolution of the inclusionist dilemma: rather than a real democratic process, architecture will reach for and operate through the line-as-tangential U.S. military state, and therefore use its global hegemonic reach not to create the intended balance of Yamasaki’s towers, but instead the unilateral, forced “equality” of the global imperial state that
glosses over the imperialist-imperialized divide with impunity (2000, 83). Though not implied in architecture as such, architecture within the U.S. military state context is prone to such manipulation by hegemonic power.

Though the existence of a public forum and an open design competition suggests an ostensibly democratic process, the architecture of the World Trade Center site and its planning are actually anything but, reinscribing the unilateralism of the original towers even in the figurative planning stages before literal construction. Freud’s “Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoïdes)” yields a fascinating encapsulation of the pseudo-democracy of the World Trade Center site: “And the paranoic builds it all again, not more splendid, it is true, but at least so that he can once more live in it. He builds it up by the work of his delusions. The delusional formation, which we take to be the pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction” (1962, 71). The rebuilding process therefore acts as a literalization of Freud’s paranoic psychology, a rejection of introspective self-examination in favor of an externalized, materialized mode of working through the delusion. What is important here is not only the idea of the U.S. military state as paranoid, always ready to act preemptively, but also the notion that the building effort is a reconstruction of the World Trade Center and its symbolism. Instead of a new building, the reconstruction is being built solely for and by the paranoic (the architect, as an agent of the U.S. military state, inherits and embodies its ideological leanings).

This unilateral slant is present in Libeskind as well, as he claims in *Breaking Ground* that “the truth of the matter… [is that] [n]o building, no matter how neutral it is supposed to be, is actually neutral,” paving the way for the unintentional unilateralism of his Freedom Tower by using the emotional approach to neutrality advocated by Adorno (2004, 121). Shortly thereafter,
Libeskind attempts to rehabilitate his multilateral credentials: “I may be among the very few design architects who go out of their way to form joint ventures on almost all their projects; I do this because I thoroughly enjoy the intellectual and artistic interplay between what begins as ‘them’ and ‘us’ and ends simply as ‘we’” (2004, 254). This claim smacks of the self-conscious realization of an architect caught in the contextual trap of his paymasters. A more representative effort at de-unilateralization is Libeskind’s insistence on “a tower that stood 1,776 feet tall,” a mild revision of David Childs’ 2000 foot plan and a reduced unilateralism indicating some awareness of the U.S. military state context associated with 1776 and the Revolutionary War (2004, 260). The importance of non-democratic, unilateral height is evident early in the planning process: “[B]y 2002, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation was urging that ‘skyline elements’ be included” (Stephens 2004, 17). Libeskind’s choice to include such a “skyline element” is not simply a function of creating the requisite square footage of office space, but rather an unintentional but necessary engagement of the hegemonic U.S. military state in the performance of an architecture towards the line. What results is a deinscription of the new democracy in favor of a reinscription of the unilateralism of the original World Trade Center, creating an asymmetry between the espoused democratic humility and actual unilateralism. Democracy itself is not a myth, but when applied asymmetrically, as is typical of the U.S. military state (democracy for allies, tyranny for the rest), it might as well be.

Asymmetry has appeared once before in this discussion, in reference to the imbalances in the realms of force and symbolism, as well as the material and the spiritual, and a similar sort of asymmetry appears in the disjunction between the espoused democratic humility of the pluralized planning process and the actual unilateralism demonstrated in its place. Aside from the more obvious, literal asymmetry of Libeskind’s design and the ready referent within the
asymmetrical warfare that both created the original World Trade Center and the Freedom Tower, while also destroying the former (and inscribing the destruction of the latter), Libeskind offers another form. When discussing the Victoria and Albert Museum addition (Figure 8) in “Daniel Libeskind: Welcome to the 21st Century,” Libeskind declares his efforts to be “not about anonymity,” making the Freedom Tower more a bombastic reassertion of the ideology of the U.S. nation-“state” and its unilateral thrust than the humble, pluralized democratic venture initially conceived (“Daniel…” 2000). A similar disjunction between the conceived reality of architecture and its actual reality is present in Libeskind’s most well known work, the Jewish Museum Berlin (Figure 9), where the intentional incline of the towers of the memorial garden foster a dizziness between the architectural horizon and the surrounding horizon (“Daniel…” 2000). This dizziness literalizes not only the disjunction between the conceived and expected right angle and the actual disorienting offset as the unilateral/democratic disjunction, but also the asymmetrical disjunction between the ideological reinscription of the U.S. nation-“state” in the Freedom Tower as contrasted against the realities of a Manhattan that bears a closer resemblance to the ideology of the military state.

Figure 8
These asymmetries contribute to a separation of the Freedom Tower, its willful alienation from the realities of democratic collapse in much the same manner as the willful permeations of the phenomenon of aggressive victimhood, a channeled emergence of the U.S. military state under the guise of democracy (or rather reemergence, the original towers carrying a more subtle unilateralism in their closed dualism, as opposed to the singularity of the Freedom Tower). The singularity implied by this alienation makes the Freedom Tower “the not-very-distant relative of all the monumental middle fingers proposed for the site since the earliest days” (Nobel 2005, 205). A crude retort to the event of September 11, the finger simply reinscribes the very singularity that creates the event in the first place (the attempted creation of a globalized One at the expense of the imperialized Other) rather than seizing the democratic opportunity to the fullest in the process of planning and design. Such singularity places the tower before the city (as ultimate symbol), above the city (in sheer height), and beyond the city (as global beacon), with disastrous results.

By singularizing the Freedom Tower as the end result of an architectural unilateralism performed at the expense of democratic planning, the tower is ultimately placed before the city
as the locus of the constructive/destructive event. This leads to a hypermagnification that overperforms the reduction of the homeland essential to the victimizing event of aggressive victimhood by reducing the homeland below the level of the city, leading to the collapse of the homeland. In *Radix-Matrix*, Libeskind cites Jacques Derrida’s discussion of the Tower of Babel and its observations on the placement of the city and the tower: “One decides to forego such a magnificent tower, relinquishes the desire for this unique structure, a regal edifice soaring up to the heavens. A generation later, when a community has grown from this act of renunciation, the decision is taken to preserve the city (in this location) instead of the impossible tower” (quoted in 1997, 119). What Derrida presciently notes is the pseudo-divine nature of the Freedom Tower as an agent of exceptional redemption, a military agent reinscribing the unilateralist ethos of the U.S. military state, as well as the necessity of renunciation and time to promote the proper ordering of city before tower.

Since the unilateral discourse of the U.S. military state requires the swift erasure of the rubble of the World Trade Center, the gap it represents acting as a potential site of observance of the willfully permeable skin defense, thereby shortening the available time for critical renunciation of the rehabilitative efforts of rebuilding and time thereafter, the Freedom Tower necessarily precedes the city. Design juror James E. Young reflects this exceptionalist allowance: “We want architects and artists – anybody who submits – to feel they can go where their imaginations, where their mourning needs to take them in order to articulate some relationship to this terrible loss” (quoted in Nobel 2005, 240-1). That mourning takes the magnification necessary for the creation of the external enemy and its accordant channel of aggression from its initial retraction to the universalized city to the tower as the extreme subset, a hypermagnification that soon becomes problematic. As a singularity, the tower becomes
invested with the ideological bases of the U.S. nation—“state,” a fictive, deterritorialized entity that, though typically rooted to a specific territorial habitus, has been rendered permeable by the solicited victimization of September 11. Since the tower is permeable, it may then become or exist as the potential domain of the inhabiting or surrounding al Qaeda military state. Defense, consisting of the magnification of the universalizable subset, then ends up universalizing the tower as the occupied ideological space of the al Qaeda military state, a Trojan horse replacing the global imperial U.S. military state with the al Qaeda military state.

The use of the Trojan horse is a timely reference, as it helps to illustrate the ways in which, though seemingly a hybrid of contemporary architecture at the superficial level and retrospective and retrogressive reinscription at the symbolic level, the Freedom Tower resides in an eternal present characterized by a perpetual interpretation of the future via the past. Libeskind himself confronts the problematic use of retrospective architecture in a contemporary project in “Daniel Libeskind: Welcome to the 21st Century,” concluding that, in respect to the Victoria and Albert Museum, its original architects “would not be doing architecture that is one hundred years old” today, an argument for the use of contemporary design that obscures its frequent inclusion of retrospective elements (“Daniel…” 2000). Libeskind identifies a balance point for the retrospective and the contemporary in his discussion of his Alexanderplatz design in Radix-Matrix, speaking of “the eternal present of transformation… as a strategy for the creation of unpredictable, flexible and hybrid architecture disseminated both horizontally and vertically” (1997, 10). The Freedom Tower is located in the eternal present of transformation not only by virtue of its status as the transformative edifice of the World Trade Center site, but also as the occupant of that site, whose prior resident is locked into the perpetual visual space of the stopgap
film of images that seals the breaches left by the solicited permeation of the skin defense in the phenomenon of aggressive victimhood.

Given the already conceded point that the Freedom Tower is less an original construction than a reconstruction of the original World Trade Center using its constituent ideological building blocks, its perpetual present is consumed by a project similar to that undertaken by Libeskind in the Imperial War Museum in Manchester. Libeskind describes the museum as “a museum which explores the significance of conflicts of the 20th century for the 21st century…[breaking] the globe into pieces… and reassembl[ing] them in Manchester-Trafford” (“Daniel…” 2000). The Freedom Tower reassembles the shards of the broken World Trade Center, itself a globe of sorts as the previous focal point of the universal city (though not a point of hypermagnification), and interprets them for the 21st century not only through the 20th century, the era of the U.S. rise to prominence as a nation-“state” and a military state, but also the 19th century and before, the era of its imperial forbears. As it is located in the eternal present, the Freedom Tower also acts as a lens for interpretation of the future, creating a dualism of sorts between the imperial past and the (neo)imperial future, a closed dualism first seen in the original World Trade Center and reinscribed in the Freedom Tower by its contextual association with the perpetually warmongering U.S. military cell. Exceptional redemption allows the pursuit of unilateral aims under the guise of architecture that, supposedly democratic in its selection and performance, is instead an exceptionalist repetition of what has come before.

The Sarcophagus

Closed dualism, reified in the binary of the original World Trade Center, meets a gruesome end on September 11, only to be reinscribed somewhat more subtly in the initial singularity of the Freedom Tower. Though many critics have remarked upon the dualism of the
original towers since September 11, Jean Baudrillard is one of the rare few to do so before that event, in Symbolic Exchange and Death. Baudrillard asks the fundamental question “[w]hy has the World Trade Center in New York got two towers?” and locates the necessity in “a competitive verticality… every building on the offensive against every other” (1993, 69). His comments in The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays tread a similar, albeit newly significant, path. When discussing the inherent distaste for overarching order, Baudrillard concludes that “[a]llergy to any definitive order, to any definitive power, is – happily – universal, and the two towers of the World Trade Center were perfect embodiments, in their very twinnness, of that definitive order” (2003, 6). The very fact of the doubled nature of the towers proves a point of great importance for Baudrillard, who later notes that “[t]he fact that there were two of them signifies the end of any original reference. If there had been only one, monopoly would not have been perfectly embodied. Only the doubling of the sign truly puts an end to what it designates” (39). Two towers make a dualism, identical towers make a closed dualism and, as signs designating, literally, the world trade of their namesake. More figuratively, the towers point to the globalization that facilitates that trade, essentially putting an end to world trade by putting an end to the world, eliminating the polyvocal world in favor of the world as rendered by the U.S. military state, a globalized U.S. imperial domain singular in its inclusion of all (markets) and exclusion of all (imperialized Others). In their sheer identicality, the towers nullify a more open dialogue, allowing dialogue only between like actors, and excluding all others not concerned with their foundational ethic, capitalism. The doubling of the sign empties the sign, an emptiness that anticipates the alter emptiness of the space where the World Trade Center once stood and renders the sign itself, world trade, an empty venture, an empty vessel that contains and is
subsequently contained badly. Erased once, this closed dualism will return in the Freedom Tower.

Closed dualism begets closed discourse, which begets the closed lid of the sarcophagus, the tower-as-tomb active in the original World Trade Center, the Freedom Tower, and a number of the memorial proposals as well. After identifying the closed dualism of the original World Trade Center, Baudrillard discusses the death inscribed in their very construction, noting that “the horror for the 4,000 [sic] victims of dying in those towers was inseparable from the horror of living in them – the horror of living and working in sarcophagi of concrete and steel” (41). The sheer verticity of the towers reflects the piles of corpses rendered by the emptying action, which literalizes the emptied sign resulting from the monopolistic dualism. The towers exist first, in their state of intact, closed dualism, as paradoxically open sarcophagi, soliciting the entry of U.S. military agents and their partial economic agent counterparts and eventually the victimizing event of September 11. Once subject to the impacts of the victimizing event, the still closed dualism of the towers is then doubled by the closing of the sarcophagi in the impassability of the impact zones. Finally, the dualism is opened by the collapse of the towers, a literalization of the sarcophagi as a solicited event, allowing the PNAC agenda to spring into action like a rocket from the tombs.

The movement of the physical material of the towers below ground through the compacting force of collapse is presaged by Libeskind in the epigrammatic phrase “[s]and falling silently into towers,” which presupposes the towers as sarcophagi or graves below ground, since sand is able to fall into them (1997, 141). Sand as the falling material is also a fortuitous choice, since it is the al Qaeda military state, typically associated with the sand of its habitual territorial locus the Middle East, that falls silently into the towers; its commandeered airliners swoop lazily
into the towers, inscribing names, dates, and epitaphs upon the faces of the towers-as-sarcophagi at the moment of impact. Defacing graves is a generally reprehensible practice, and one would expect the same of September 11, a narrative carried through most accounts of the event. The World Trade Center attack is simply a pinprick attack on the larger U.S. nation-“state” as sarcophagus (since the towers represent the fictive nation-“state”), the very terms of its constitution (and the misapplication of its Constitution) inscribing its death.

As the Freedom Tower is itself a sarcophagus in its assembly from the reconstituted ideological elements of the original World Trade Center, so too are a number of the memorial proposals offered for the World Trade Center site, some of which literalize the sarcophagus, the tower(s), or both. Jonathan Safran Foer offers a vision of exceptional redemption defined by Oskar Schell’s efforts to make peace with his father’s death on September 11. Oskar discusses numerous rebuilding and memorialization options, including “skyscrapers for dead people that were built down… a whole dead world… underneath the living one,” much like the inscribed death of Baudrillard’s sarcophagi (Foer 2005, 3). Oskar’s notion of skyscrapers for the dead, of towering tombs as a form of memorial, finds a real world parallel in the memorial proposal of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon and Nellie King Solomon, where “[t]wo new steel and mirrored glass towers rise higher than the original towers, while below ground two memorials under the original towers’ footprints reach a depth of 110 stories, the height of the original towers” (Stephens 2004, 166). The proposal includes not only a reinscription of the exceptionalist ideology of the original towers in the reassertion of the necessity of height as a skyline element, but also two gaping tombs that, in their mirroring of the original towers, reveal the towers as inverted tombs. This inversion is perhaps the excavation of antiquated imperialist notions for reuse in the ideological materials of the towers (as drawn from the ideology of the U.S. nation-
“state”), making September 11 not a day of original death, but rather of repeated and wholly anticipatable death, given the solicitation of the event through application of known imperial quantities.

While less of a mirror image than the Solomon proposal, the winning proposal submitted by Michael Arad and Peter Walker, entitled “Reflecting Absence,” does include “a container – much like a giant sarcophagus – for the unidentified remains of the victims” (38). This container literalizes the sarcophagus aspect more directly than the towers, though the sarcophagus does reside in one of the footprints, and as such references both the fractured status of the collapsed tower and the pre-collapse area above the impact zone as a sealed tomb of sorts. Implicit death, as it appears in the original World Trade Center and its dueling sarcophagi, as well as the reinscription of those sarcophagi in the reassembled World Trade Center clone the Freedom Tower, with its static, eroding partner the Statue of Liberty, is literalized in the memorial proposals. It is telling that those produced viscerally, shortly after the event, yield the closest approximation of the tomb and its realization of the impossibility of peace inscribed in the towers, while the eventual winner borders on sterility. As sarcophagi, the World Trade Center towers, the Freedom Tower, and the various memorial efforts illustrate the death implied in the unilateralist ethos enacted by their symbolism and conditions of creation.

**Text and Reading**

Given the various ways in which inscription and reinscription of the ideological tenets of the U.S. nation-“state” appear in reference to the original World Trade Center and its reassembled partner, the Freedom Tower, one may observe clear textual characteristics in the architectural forms, as they construct a specific narrative of unilateral exceptionalism. In *Breaking Ground*, Libeskind locates the power of narrative in architecture, outlining its often
problematic nature: “If architecture fails, if it is pedestrian and lacks imagination and power, it
tells only one story, that of its own making: how it was built, detailed, financed. But a great
building… can tell the story of the human soul. It can make us see the world in a wholly new
way, change it forever” (2004, 4). Libeskind grasps the narrative potential of architecture as a
reservoir of not only humanity in its literal function as a container, but also as a reservoir of the
soul, a transformational venture tied to the perpetual present of transformation and therefore
granted an interpretive license over the past and future. The statement also grasps the inherent
danger of architecture and the unavoidable danger of rebuilding on the World Trade Center site.
It refers to: the impossibility of imagination when building from reconstituted rubble; the
impossibility of power when the architecture of the World Trade Center and its remaining site
are inhabited by the al Qaeda military state; and, the impossibility of multiple narratives in an
architectural project founded upon the closed dualism of the original World Trade Center and
controlled by the unilateral U.S. military state (and therefore condemned to repeat its ideologies).

Libeskind likely intends “to communicate, through other means, in a very concrete way”
the event of September 11 and life thereafter, as he does for his Jewish Museum Berlin in
11, the asymmetries of the rubble, themselves suggestive of the implied asymmetries of force
and symbolism, material and spiritual, find a textual home in the Freedom Tower, though close
reading favors the implied asymmetries above the literal asymmetries of the rubble. Despite the
marginal potential for close reading at this point in the narrative, the ruffled feathers of the U.S.
military state rooster and of the U.S. nation-“state” chickens from Qutb suggest less of the
asymmetries of warfare, and more of the asymmetrical middle finger of the Freedom Tower’s
schematic forebears. This suggestion eliminates the possibility of the Freedom Tower as a truly
readable text, and instead renders it a pre-read text with an explicit, clear message: “terrorists” need not apply (for entry, because they are already included in the reconstituted World Trade Center). The brief moment of readability provided by September 11 is just as swiftly erased.

Though quickly obscured under the guise of materialization, the event of September 11 establishes a brief moment of legibility, wherein the solicited event illustrates the approved gaps in the skin defense, and one may gaze through those gaps to see the operation of the U.S. military state. Lacan offers an interesting anamorphotic parallel demonstrating the structure of this readability, speaking of “Holbein’s painting of The Ambassadors… [i]f you place yourself at a certain angle from which the painting itself disappears in all its relief by reason of the converging lines of its perspective, you will see a death’s head appear, the sign of the classic theme of vanitas” (1992, 135). Like Lacan’s example, placement of the collateral citizen at a certain angle from the event of September 11, at the far reaches of the ideological space of the U.S. nation-“state” (removal an impossibility without the assumption of military agency), the unilateral narrative disappears as the film of images becomes translucent. Translucency yields the appearance of the death’s head of the U.S. military state in action, soliciting the deaths of three thousand of its collateral citizens to as to perpetuate its own hegemony, ruining one nation-“state” so as to imperialize another.

Michel Foucault offers a parallel example in his discussion of “Las Meninas” in The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, where the mirror in the center of the image, “by making visible, beyond even the walls of the studio itself, what is happening in front of the picture, creates… an oscillation between the interior and exterior” (1973, 11). The mirror acts as a perspectival device which makes the invisible power, in this case King Philip IV and his wife, visible through a rupture in the foreground of the image. Foucault’s relocation of the
viewer outside of the studio stands as a narrative relocation facilitated by the rupture, wherein the interior and exterior obliterated by globalization comes into play. Though typically characterized as a distant Other, the al Qaeda military state is in fact within the bounds of the U.S. global state, and thus Foucault’s relocation of the viewer places the viewer not outside of the studio, but rather within the studio. This move makes the pseudo-external narrative of equal value to the pseudo-internal narrative, as both rise from the same source. Michel de Certeau demonstrates the agency of perspective in relation to the World Trade Center itself, where “elevation transfigures [the viewer] to a voyeur… [and] continues to construct the fiction that creates readers, makes the complexity of the city readable, and immobilizes its opaque mobility in a transparent text” (1988, 92). De Certeau’s emphasis on the power of elevation speaks to a panoptic positionality.11 Such elevation grants a clarity unavailable at street level, a perspective advantage that, when first applied by the towers themselves, produces the mythos of the readable city, the universal city in the schema of aggressive victimhood. This mythos meets its perspective match in the elevation of impacting airliners on September 11, a seizure of perspective that restores readability from its pseudo-panoptic height to the reality of street level through the literal destruction of the elevated towers and the figurative pluralization of the viewer into each event witness.

Legibility allows a brief moment in which a narrative may be established prior to its consolidation in the approved narrative of the U.S. military state, and as such is the only immediate opportunity for critical perspectives to intervene in the discourse of the event before its solidification. As soon as this legibility is made available, its symbolic mobility becomes static through association with the material, a desymbolization apparent in Libeskind’s assertion that “no interpretation can eliminate the materiality, opacity, and thickness of the experience of
walking, looking, touching, feeling where one is” (2003, 45). Libeskind’s insistence on the viability of the material as the locus of textuality references de Certeau’s walker as unconscious marker, a distinctly symbolic actor concerned less with looking, touching, feeling than being observed, touched, felt as a target, making the focus on materiality a means of negating realization of the self-targeting nature of aggressive victimhood. However, Libeskind is likely concerned with the material as a means of connection rather than disconnection. When analyzing Libeskind’s Jewish Museum Berlin, James E. Young calls the museum “an example of process architecture[;] according to Libeskind, this building ‘is always on the verge of Becoming – no longer suggestive of a final solution’” (2001, 186). The process of Becoming allows Libeskind to draw the issue further into the realm of the material, while also situating the building within a fascist system not only through its exhibition of artifacts from the Holocaust era, but also through its notion of an alternative to such a Final Solution, offering instead the same perpetual action seen in preemptive war. Preemptive war relies on a constant flow of enemies to facilitate a hidden agenda of neo-imperialism that is always already unfinished, and Becoming operates on a similar perpetual effort. The creation of enemies is made easy by the simple necessity of designation as such to create their targeted status.

As process architecture, the World Trade Center is always on the verge of becoming the seat of world commerce upon the impossible completion of globalization, no longer suggesting any solution other than its own. On September 11, as processed architecture, the World Trade Center is on the verge of becoming rubble; becoming readable as the fictive center of the fictive global state, a surplus of meaning beyond the accepted narrative that must be quashed to preserve the authority of the approved text.
Libeskind’s use of signs prior to his design for the Freedom Tower indicates a similar surplus, excessive meaning. His excessive meaning, however, does not result in the visible inscription of the problematic of U.S. military state unilateralism, but rather in the invisible reinscription of the hyperexceptionalism of that military state. For some of his early models, Kurt W. Forster notes in *Radix-Matrix*, Libeskind “veiled sculptural forms beneath a layer of written (paper) scraps… [allowing] [t]he discrepancy between a wealth of signs and what the signs conceal [to settle] like a layer of snow over his objects” (Libeskind 1997, 7). The scraps create an overabundance of signs which, while themselves readable, obscures the greater readability of the forms beneath in a haze of speech much like “terrorist” “chatter.” Libeskind articulates his intent for this surplus text in “Holy Truth in Rough,” offering an elliptical vision of what that text produces: “New language – not for renegades or hermits – which instantly weans the masses from their infantile longing for geometrical alphabets, factional debates, desire to polish each salt crystal with a microscopic chisel” (1996, 94). Essentially, Libeskind is proposing a new language, a new architectural grammar made neither for the rogue al Qaeda military state in Afghan caves, nor for the equally renegade U.S. and U.S. proxy forces operating covertly abroad. The language eliminates any sense of discourse which will ready the masses for architectural asymmetries, leaving imperialized subjects to bear the brunt of bald imperialist aims without the masses quibbling about details like collateral deaths. Like the Moebius skin which contains and is contained badly, Libeskind’s designs, like that for the Victoria and Albert Museum, “create an interlocking of the inside and the outside,” a rupture of sorts exemplified by the profusion of Libeskind’s new language (1997, 82). So overwhelming is the new grammar that the already exceptionalist skin defense cannot contain the asymmetries posed by Libeskind’s language, leading to a (perhaps solicited and approved) rupture in the skin
defense, producing the pronounced jutting of the Freedom Tower in a distinctly asymmetrical fashion. With little concern for the piddling details of factional debates and microscopic issues, Libeskind presses forward with his new language without realizing that, though perhaps the grammar may contain a glimmer of invention, the U.S. military state context dooms his efforts. The words composing the text are retreads from the original World Trade Center, rendering his tower a retread as well, though one so unaware of its devices as to compound the exceptionalism of this original into a hyperexceptionalism. Readability of the event as text exists only briefly before being obscured beneath the approved narrativization and its preference for the material over the symbolic.

The Face

Perhaps the most readable surface available on the original World Trade Center, and certainly the most readable on September 11, is the building face or faces which, while purportedly obscuring the related economic activities of the U.S. military state, actually make the solicited inhabitation by the al Qaeda military state visible before the event of September 11 even takes place. Libeskind identifies the potential of the building face in *Breaking Ground*, saying that “[buildings] don’t have just facades but faces that turn either toward or away,” thereby endowing the building face with its own gaze (2004, 107). Through the solicited inhabitation by the al Qaeda military state, this gaze becomes the Other, returning the focused gaze of the U.S. military state and its efforts to magnify the universal city in the phenomenon of aggressive victimhood. Inhabitation also produces an external gaze that returns the al Qaeda military state supposedly externalized by the magnification process.

The al Qaeda military state’s presence is evident not only through the more abstract gaze, but also through the more literal architectural specificities of the faces themselves, mimicking
Islamic design in their form. When discussing the Great Mosque in Cordoba, Tariq Ali notes that its interior creates “[t]he impression of infinite space, [specifically] the forest of pillars,” a forest of pillars mimicked in the structural aluminum columns that dominate the face of the World Trade Center (2002, 36). Those columns also create the impression of infinite space, the all-inclusive imperial U.S. global state approximating infinity on Earth and seeking it in space through the Star Wars missile defense program.\(^{14}\) The conclusion of those columns as they approach the plaza also references Islamic design, with the “arches at the base (evoking… Islamic motifs)” in a manner that specifically suggests al Qaeda, whose translation as “the base” meshes with the presence of Islamic elements at the base of the towers (Stephens 2004, 21).

This visibility, this facial occupation, is largely potential before the event of September 11, a subtle presence meant to evoke retrospective surprise upon reflection on the images of the towers, a realization that the al Qaeda military state was there all along. Later actualized and, in its own way, magnified in the collapse of the towers, the gazing Other in the face of the World Trade Center looks out to its externalized military agents, offering a wink in the rough gash of Flight 11’s impact, thereby signaling the full return of the al Qaeda military state to its rightful place within mother America. Once observed by the U.S. military state, efforts are undertaken to shield the gaze through the clearing of rubble, the monopolization of discourse and, most importantly, the application of an ethic of monumentality to rebuilding and memorialization.

Before that monumentality may be enacted, or rather within the course of its enactment, the face of the original World Trade Center must be reinscribed in accordance with the ideology of the U.S. nation-“state,” repossessed retroactively so as to supply imagery for the film of images set to plug the gaps opened by aggressive victimhood. In the course of analyzing the voids within Libeskind’s Jewish Museum Berlin, James E. Young notes that “[w]hat one sees
here, [Libeskind] seems to say, is actually only a mask for all that is missing, for the great
absence of life that now makes a presentation of these artifacts a necessity” (2001, 193). This
statement has direct links to the management of the tower face by the U.S. military state. The
repossessed face is only a mask for all that is missing, not only the unprecedented loss of life
assumed in the exceptionalist reading of September 11, but also an ideological mask concealing
the emptiness of U.S. nation-“state” (and military state) rhetoric. This mask necessitates the
display of artifactualized and revised visions of the tower face that clearly places it in the
temporally sealed past. Where Libeskind thinks that his Freedom Tower is a mask of sorts
meant to temper the grief for the dead, it is rather a mask concealing the ideological emptiness of
the U.S. nation-“state” ideologies. Unlike the emptiness produced by the suffering reflected in
the Jewish Museum Berlin, the emptiness masked in the Freedom Tower is internally cultivated
and internally performed. This process produces an index of sanitized imagery, cleansed of any
sense of the emptiness predating the event in favor of the fullness suggested by the jumpers
(supreme victims whose exit implies an overflowing within the towers, an excessive presence
that masks the true absence within).

After these images are produced, they are then reprojected upon the revised skin of the
tower face, “the screen against which the figures in the dream which symbolize or personify the
psychological forces and agencies in conflict appear… [where] [t]he film may be defective, the
reel may get stuck or let in light, and the dream is erased” (Anzieu 1989, 211). The tower face
acts as the screen for the reassertion of the American dream so essential to the ideology of the
U.S. nation-“state,” positioning the U.S. as rising from nothing in the wake of September 11
back to world prominence, when the opposite is true. The light (the divine al Qaeda military
agents), once let in, reveals the defects in the film of images and erases the dream. Reinscription
of the tower face continues despite the revelation of the al Qaeda military state inscription, eventually migrating from the original World Trade Center and the plethora of books, posters, and films that document its passing, to the new World Trade Center, the Freedom Tower. In the mobilization of the screen, the U.S. military state feels that it has evaded the al Qaeda military state inhabitation, in fact only perpetuating that inhabitation in the film of images, and performing a similar perpetuation in its ethic of monumentality. The face as screen serves as a surface for the enactment of al Qaeda military state inhabitation and U.S. military state reinscription, though the latter is compromised by a lack of knowledge about the former.

### III. Monumentality

The ethics of monumentality,\(^\text{15}\) while attempting to control and often condemn discourse in the process of valorizing often suspicious actions, ultimately become an empty sign, much like Baudrillard’s monopolistic World Trade Center. At the end of his *Sixteen Acres: Architecture and the Outrageous Struggle for the Future of Ground Zero*, Philip Nobel offers a useful query: “Architecture remembering architecture – that is beyond question something that memorial can do. Whether it will ‘respect this place made sacred through tragic loss,’ whether it will redeem Ground Zero, only time will tell” (2005, 255). Nobel’s concern reveals the final depersonalization beneath the larger hyperpersonalization enacted after September 11 to draw the event from the symbolic to the material, a memorial that lauds architecture itself, rather than its victims. James E. Young identifies a “memorial uncanny… [that] leave[s] such events unredeemable yet still memorable, unjustifiable yet still graspable in their causes and effects” (2001, 180). This approach assumes both the impossibility of the exceptional redemptionist venture undertaken by the U.S. military state, as well as the obscuring tangibility that such material memorialization provides (2001, 180). Later on in his articulation of the memorial
uncanny, Young speaks of Libeskind’s “1988 work ‘Line of Fire,’ [where he] takes this single line, folds and breaks it – and thereby transforms it from non-architecture to the buildable,” a statement with much to say about the operation of aggressive victimhood (188).

Libeskind’s “Line of Fire,” like aggressive victimhood, intentionally ruptures the border so as to allow the construction of previously unbuildable architecture under the guise of the memorial and, in the hands of the U.S. military state context, allows the newly viable construction of empire along the lines envisioned by PNAC. Pseudo-democracy, as revealed in the architectural planning process as well as the architecture itself, is also present in the absence of consensus behind monuments observed by James E. Young in “Memory/Monument”:

“[W]here the ancients used monumentality to express the absolute faith they had in the common ideals and values that bound them together, the moderns… have replicated only the rhetoric of monumentality” (2003, 236). This absence of consensus yields the monument as an empty sign, buildable yet unable to redeem the event in question, remembering only itself in the absence of ideological support from the collateral citizenry who, included in the dualism of World Trade Centers past and future yet excluded by the ideological vacuum of the fictive U.S. nation-“state,” are participants in nothingness.

Monuments, as museums of a sort in their creation of historical narrative through the process of artifactualization, similarly finalize those narratives, doing so with such abandon that, in the case of September 11, it is not only architecture which remembers itself, but also the destruction of that architecture. Architecture is a complex and vital manifestation of the monument that simultaneously deadens that which it seeks to bring to life/recall. Young notes that “in his design for a Jewish Museum in Berlin, Libeskind proposed not so much a solution to the planners’ conundrum as he did its architectural articulation” (2001, 186). Young’s statement
makes Libeskind’s design for the Freedom Tower (at once a project of rebuilding and memorialization, anything built in the “sacred” space acting as at least a provisional memorial) not so much an answer to the question of the operation of the U.S. military state raised by the al Qaeda military state, as a materialization of the ideologies that produced and solicited September 11. The ideological materialization thereby attempts to erase not only the question raised by the event, but also, in essence, the event itself. Materialization revokes the status of the event as a solicited event through inclusion in the restated unilateral ideology of the memorial, what Young elsewhere identifies as Andreas Huyssen’s “inverse proportion between memorialization of the past and its contemplation and study” (2003, 238). By erecting a memorial, the approved narrative of September 11 is sealed to those outside of the ideological locus of the U.S. nation-state,” allowing room for a rearticulation of the unilateral ideology that produced and solicited the event and categorical denial of any point for contemplation and study, the event in question now fitting neatly within the approved narrative. Much like Horst Hoheisel’s proposal to memorialize the Holocaust by blowing up the Brandenburg Gate, where “Hoheisel sought to mark one destruction with another destruction,” plans for the September 11 memorial process similarly mark the destruction of the ideologies of the U.S. nation-state” with a destruction of the discourse surrounding that ideological destruction (241). The doubled destruction, rather than nullifying the ideological ruin by rendering it invisible, amplifies it by its palpable absence within the approved narrative. In reconstituting the fractured ideologies of the U.S. nation-state” in the Freedom Tower and including some of the literal rubble in Arad and Walker’s sarcophagus, the monumental ethic as applied to September 11 is essentially pouring old wine into new bottles. Reconstruction denies not only an answer to the question posed by the al Qaeda military state, but also the question, and renders the destruction implicit to the process of
memorialization not a reconstruction of the destructed, but a de-destruction of the destruction that eliminates its status as a destruction in the first place. De-destruction makes it seem as if the event never happened, and that the pre-event condition of the destructed was in fact better than it actually was.

Memorializing destruction with a destructive monument both normalizes and negates the viability of destruction as a means of memorialization, yielding only division and parody. Herbert Muschamp’s appraisal of Libeskind’s Freedom Tower design in *Breaking Ground* exemplifies the problem: “Daniel Libeskind’s project for the World Trade Center site is a startlingly aggressive tour de force, a war memorial to a looming conflict that has scarcely begun” (quoted in 2004, 167). While Muschamp’s assertion that the conflict has scarcely begun is hardly accurate, the roots of September 11 dating back decades to the establishment of Israel and the Afghan war of the 1980's (if not the Crusades), his contention that Libeskind’s design memorializes destruction by necessarily reinscribing destruction, the jagged asymmetries of his tower acting as a knife thrust into the sky, could hardly be more accurate (if unintentional on Libeskind’s part). The question that remains is whether a memorial may be constructed for an ongoing event, the Freedom Tower existing as a monument to the perpetual advance of the U.S. military state.

Unsatisfied with the powers it held in the initial globalization effort, the U.S. military state solicited a victimizing event so as to reimperialize in accordance with the more favorable PNAC agenda of perpetual war for a perpetually larger piece of the pie. Young contends, in “Memory/Monument” and its discussion of Holocaust memorials, that “[a] monument against fascism… would have to be a monument against itself: against the traditionally didactic function of monuments, against their tendency to displace the past they would have us contemplate”
The September 11 memorial would therefore be at once a monument against the revelation of the emptiness of the U.S. nation-“state” ideology with an implicit, approved narrative and a temporalized event structure, as well as a monument against the de-destruction that eliminates the awareness fostered by the original solicited event. A monument thus divided against itself cannot stand, as illustrated by the inevitable collapse of the North Tower of the original World Trade Center after the loss of its monopolistic twin the South Tower, as well as the collapse of the liberty embodied by the Statue of Liberty, the Freedom Tower’s monopolistic twin, in the face of the PATRIOT Act. Prior to the destruction of the towers, each serves as the monopolistic twin of the other. After their demise, the singular Freedom Tower necessitates a similarly monopolistic twin to maintain the closed dualism, and locates this twin in the ideological centerpiece that is the Statue of Liberty. Rather than the compromised memorial of the (post)modern era, Young suggests that “only the parodic mirror is strong enough to neutralize the monument’s solemn charge,” offering parody as a more fit memorial effort (243). This parody is duly provided in the very solemnity of the original World Trade Center and its reconstitution in the Freedom Tower, the divine (in both senses) comedy of the willful ineffectualism of the U.S. military state undermining that solemnity in playful destruction, inverting American iconography through prior inhabitation. Monumentality acts as a means of pursuing neo-imperialist agendas under the guise of a memory that finalizes narratives before they may be fully explored.

**Iconography**

The use of iconography, specifically that of the fictive U.S. nation-“state,” as a site of inversion and inhabitation by the al Qaeda military state has its roots in the prime action of architecture, the root of its force; that is, in drawing. As Paul Virilio quotes from a catalogue for
a Giacometti exhibit, “[i]f one more or less mastered drawing, all the rest would be possible…

*Drawing is the beginning of everything,* establishing drawing in its various forms as the principal action of architectural force (quoted in 2002, 59).16 Perhaps the initial location of drawing-as-iconography (all drawing producing iconic imagery of some sort, be it crude or considered) is the literal and figurative delineation of the U.S. military state and its construction of boundless boundaries. This imperialist architecture is aided first by lines drawn in the sand, then drawn weapons, and finally the drawn, solicited event of September 11 as the facilitator of further redrawing of borders. The drawn, solicited victimizing event of September 11 is itself a dual architecture, existing at once as the U.S. military state allowing the permeation of its skin defense through the phenomenon of aggressive victimhood and therefore drawing the al Qaeda military state into its universal city, as well as the al Qaeda military state allowing the permeation of its brief territorial habitus. The permeation of the Afghan nation-“state,” along with the permeation of its military state in the deaths of the hijackers through aggressive victimhood, draws the U.S. military state out from beneath its now ruined U.S. nation-“state.”

Perhaps the individual location of drawing-as-iconography, as well as the origin of architectural force, is Mohamed Atta, himself an architecture student in Egypt and Germany. Atta’s drawing enables him, as a global collateral citizen within the imperialized space of the imperial U.S. global state, to achieve a mobility like that of the military agent. In fact, it is the drawn line of Libeskind’s “Line of Fire” and its architecture towards the line that endows architecture with its force through association with the tangential military state. The artist, now rendered a military agent through the drawn line and its endowed force, creates icons associated with the nation-“state.” Thy are then transformed from benign, empty signs of similarly empty nation-“state” ideology to loci of inhabitation for military states. Before, during, and after
September 11, the al Qaeda military state uses this method to inhabit the iconography of the U.S. nation-“state,” inverting that iconography in a calculated parody of the fictive ideologies and the fictive nation-“state” that they represent.

With the reality of nationhood called into question by the erasures of globalization, drawn iconography creates and reinforces the ideological nation-“state,” also allowing its spectacular inhabitation, which is then sublimated by spurious historical referents so as to preserve the ideological bases of the iconography. In the course of reconstituting the nation-“state” in the ideological field after globalization’s erasure of the purely territorial field through “the fundamental paradox of the ‘passion for the Real’ … it culminates in its apparent opposite, in a theatrical spectacle” (Žižek 2002, 9). The iconographic spectacle, somewhat redundant given the necessarily spectacular nature of the reinstatement of ideological nation-“state”hood through drawn symbols with little historical, territorial, or ideological referent (an ideal “state” instead of an actual [military] state), is not all-inclusive.

Images of the inhabited iconography of September 11 are so tightly edited that “it is surprising how little of the actual carnage we see – no dismembered bodies, no blood, no desperate faces of dying people” (13). This editing suggests not only the highly fictive nature of the ideological nation-“state” given the selectivity needed to construct it, but also film editing and the filmic referents available in both the raw imagery and its piecemeal assembly into the approved iconography. Žižek poses the question thusly: “Where have we already seen the same thing over and over again?” observing both the repetition necessary for acceptance of a necessarily areferential iconography to take hold (its preglobal national referent having been erased), and also the precedent for victimizing events like September 11 in film (17). As quickly as filmic referents appear, they are obscured beneath other, spurious historical referents, most
notably the Ground Zero of Hiroshima, and also Pearl Harbor. The latter becomes problematic when one considers it as an attack, on a colonialist military installation during a declared (though perhaps not recognized) war, the former when one considers it as a U.S. attack on a civilian population much larger than the victim population of September 11 (though closer as an act of “terrorism”). Jonathan Safran Foer clarifies the spuriousness of Hiroshima, telling of victims with “skin peeling off all over his [sic] body… skin melting down” on a scale not seen on September 11 (2005, 187). Despite the deliberate evasion of filmic referents, one does eventually sneak through, a referent that also foregrounds an important and typically misunderstood concept within nation-“state” iconography.

The ideal citizen is a central icon within U.S. nation-“state” iconography, though that citizen’s collateral status is revealed and reinforced by the solicitation of and response to the event of September 11. Pellegrino recounts the fortuitous survival of one filmic referent in the carnage of September 11: “Stumbling through the fog, searching for survivors, Captain Crawley saw a portrait looming ahead… a movie poster of Arnold Schwarzenegger. This time, the action hero was wearing a fireman’s uniform. A caption on the poster read: ‘His family was killed by terrorists. Now it’s time for revenge.’ The title of the film was Collateral Damage” (2004, 433-4). Collateral damage, thereby symbolically present on September 11, is also iconographically present in the inversion of the typical location of collateral damage in the path of bombs dropped by the U.S. military state, far away from the territorial habitus of the U.S. nation-“state,” to the universal city of that nation-“state.” When taking place in the imperialized sector of the imperialized U.S. global state (later the externalized Other of the post-event magnified homeland), collateral damage and its collateralization of the citizen is acceptable, one of the “unfortunate but unavoidable costs of necessary military action,” in this case the cost of already
imperialized collateral citizens (Domke 2004, 73). However, when the (il)logic of collateral damage and its collateralization of the iconographic citizen is inhabited by the al Qaeda military state, the reaction is different.

The al Qaeda formulation of reasoned collateral damage is as follows: “[I]f he’s a good person, he go to paradise and if he’s a bad person, he go to hell” (quoted in Benjamin and Simon 2003, 120). When applied, the ethic allows and essentially reveals the collateralization and collateral status of the citizen in the imperial U.S. global state, where the mobility of the military state serves to enable the collateralization via its tangentiality to most populations. In fact, the al Qaeda military state formulation is not even needed to collateralize the U.S. nation-“state” citizen, the provision for necessary military action allowing the collateralization of the September 11 victims as part of the solicited, necessary event. George W. Bush states, on the one year anniversary of September 11, that “[t]here is a line in our time and in every time between those who believe that all men are created equal and those who believe that some men and women are expendable in the pursuit of power” (quoted in Domke 2004, 104). Bush’s rhetoric does not accord with his record of expending soldiers and civilians in the course of his neo-imperialist agenda. Similarly, the difference between a truly visionary, modern monument at the World Trade Center site and what is demanded by the neo-imperialist ideology illustrates the disjunction between Bush’s words and deeds. His line is the border of the tangential U.S. military state, and his time of expendability is September 11 and its validation of collateralization, stripping agency from the citizen and giving it to the military agent.

Military agents, as the sole possessors of the power of collateralization, are the supreme global actors. Their agency sits well with the U.S. military state when it is the only possessor, but not as well when the al Qaeda military state possesses it as well. In a precursor event to the
formation of the al Qaeda military state, the Iranian hostage crisis, “a theatrical occupation of the embassy and… taking of hostages,” the Iranian military agents offer a dilemma of collateralization, a decision between prioritizing citizen’s lives or an ethic of refusing to negotiate with “terrorists” (Ali 2002, 137). The decision, a difficult one at the time, is no longer an issue, negotiations now denied out of hand.17

This inversion of the typical direction of collateralization, with the imperialized Other reemerging as an al Qaeda military agent to collateralize the citizen of the U.S. nation-“state,” is doubled in the language of Munir al Makdah, a suicide operative recruiter profiled in Joyce M. Davis’ Martyrs: Innocence, Vengeance, and Despair in the Middle East, who calls the hijackers “eagles, not suicide bombers or martyrs… I call them eagles because of their bravery” (quoted in 2003, 159). Inverting the eagle as an iconographic symbol of American freedom, Makdah illustrates its inhabitation by the al Qaeda military state, ultimately the superior reservoir of the individual heroism implied by the eagle’s bold singularity. Democratization of U.S. nation-“state” iconography, in a neat ideological turn brought about by its inhabitation by the al Qaeda military state, globalizes the very iconography meant to reinstate the U.S. nation-“state” after its deterritorialization by globalization, making the adherents of U.S. nation-“state” iconography “[n]ot patriots of the United States but ‘Patriots of the World” (quoted in Parenti 2004, 159). The spectacle of reasserted iconography arises from, consults with, and informs film. This relation is best captured in Libeskind’s “Holy Truth in Rough”: “This beggar’s film will be hinged, fanwise, to each witness by means of a retractable, always noisy puff of smoke” (1996, 96). Here, the beggar is the collateral citizen yearning for a sense of nation-“state”hood, as is the witness, saddled with iconography via the film in concert with the film, and because of the film and its solicited event, the necessarily repeated puff of smoke of September 11, a space of
produced memory and reinscribed iconography. Thus, iconography functions as a site of both inhabitation and reinscription, and its central icon, the collateral citizen, is left to inherit the consequences. Homeland having failed, architecture steps into the breach as the representative of the magnified universal city, though it too fails to stem the Oedipal riptide, necessitating further magnification from the city to the tower, and finally from the tower to the cellular.

2 This suggestion appears in a child’s card sent to St. Paul’s Chapel in New York City.
4 A similar use of light appears throughout the architectural canon, and is analyzed at length in Dan Flavin’s *Dan Flavin: The Architecture of Light* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation [distributed by Harry N. Abrams], 1999) and Carl Gardner and Ralph Molony’s *Light* (Crans-Près-Céligny: Roto Vision, 2001).
6 Indeed, the light as gaze is set within Lacan’s discussion of the function of the gaze.
7 Exceptional redemption refers to a specific type of redemptive effort wherein the agent considers itself to have access to or to be more deserving of a typically unilateral reassertion of agency in the wake of a downturn of some sort. After constructing an elaborate position of profound and unimpeachable victimhood, the agent responds by springing back to and beyond its prior positionality via the unilateral act, justifying the act with its self-constructed status as an extreme victim. In essence, the agent cultivates a fictitious (or at least grossly exaggerated) victimhood as a pretense for pursuing preexisting agendas of unilateralism, making exceptional redemption a sub-function of aggressive victimhood.
10 The bounds of the communication Libeskind seeks are specified by the realities of life after September 11, an extremely complex landscape marked by the conjunction of the renewed neo-imperial effort and its approved narrativization with the apparent narrative evident prior to the constitution of the approved version.
11 At such an elevation, the viewer is essentially within a panoptic space, as s/he may look down upon the city and its collateral citizens while her/himself being obscured behind the aluminum façade of the towers. While it is initially successful in its efforts to maintain the readability of the universal city, the panoptic perch is less successful in the face of the intrusion of the al Qaeda military state in the form of the planes. Upon arrival of the planes, the panoptic positionality is both obliterated completely in the destruction of the towers and also doubled in the presence of the al Qaeda military state, ruining the panopticism by allowing the U.S. military state seer to be seen.

14 The Strategic Defense Initiative, popularly known as Star Wars, was proposed in President Ronald Reagan’s first term as a ground- and space-based defense against nuclear missile strikes. Difficulties with the technology and opposition from critics concerned by the cost and diplomatic implications of the initiative scuttled the initial effort, though the concept is still mentioned from time to time, most notably by George W. Bush in 2004, as described in Jim Wolf’s “Bush Moves Toward ‘Star Wars’ Missile Defense,” http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/intervention/2004/0202missdefense.htm (accessed March 3, 2006).

15 Monumentality is not limited solely to the monument itself, but also less literal and more expansive configurations of memory-invested entities. In the case of holy lands, more specifically Israel, the entire designated area falls under the banner of the monument, its periodic destruction creating it as a site fit for memorialization, while also broadening the territory of the memory to include all contested areas. Another case of alternate monumentality is the World Trade Center, whose towers stood as monuments to a particular (hegemonic) vision of international commerce under globalization, and whose collapse monumentalizes both the “monumental” scale of the event and its monumentalization as a sign of the profligate evil of the al Qaeda military state Other and the eternal victimization of the U.S. The monument is omnipresent as a part of and marker of American history, and receives attention in a number of texts, including William Knowlton Zinsser’s *American Places: A Writer’s Pilgrimage to 15 of This Country’s Most Visited and Cherished Sites* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993), Sanford Levinson’s *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), and Lynn Davis’ *American Monument* (Introduction by Witold Rybczynski. New York: Monacelli, 2004). Critical approaches to the American monument are also frequent, including James W. Loewen’s *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), Paul A. Shackel’s *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2001), and Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin’s *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

16 This focus on drawn iconography brings us back to Huet’s *The Fox in the Chicken Coop* and its artistic, iconographic rendering of the homeland under attack. Huet’s image references imperialistic iconography while at once devaluing its hegemonic force and illustrating the tenuous security offered by imperial defenses, which are already inhabited by the Other in the moment depicted.

3. “Attack”¹: cellular

I. The Cell and the Pathogen

At the final level of magnification, beneath the U.S. global state, the territorial homeland following the victimizing event, the universal city following the solicited permeation of the skin defense, and the tower following the permeation of the universal city, lies the cellular, the true level of operation for the military state. As a non-“state” actor, the military state operates at a sub-“state” level, its mobility requiring the independence, decentralization, and diminished populations that only the cellular may provide. While “macroscopic phenomena still conform to deterministic analysis… microscopic phenomena do not behave in any such way,” and the shift from the macroscopic nation-“state” to the microscopic military state facilitates a similar behavioral adjustment (Baudrillard 2001, 20). Though the al Qaeda military state has been operating at the cellular level since its conception out of simple necessity (mobility being a must for a non-state actor), the U.S. military state is new to cellular methodologies and pathologies. It is this naïveté that proves the downfall of the U.S. military state, as its flawed cellular adoption serves only to reveal its likeness to the demonized “terrorist” actors.

Al Qaeda identifies the importance of cellular construction to the format of its military state in a captured manual, outlining in rough the nature of that construction: “Cell or cluster methods should be adopted by the Organization. It should be composed of many cells whose members do not know one another, so that if a cell member is caught the other cells would not be affected, and work would proceed normally” (Venzke 2002, 35). Rather than the ideology of the nation-“state,” where nationalism would dictate some act of brazen heroism to rescue the captured comrade, the cellular accepts death as a function of its modus operandi, even embracing
death when it may be of benefit to the larger community of cells, a community of belief, though only in itself and its mission.

The language used by the al Qaeda military state to describe its cellular organization mimics the language of Daniel Paul Schreber, where he “feel[s] awakening within him the embryonic germ, the stirrings of which he has already experienced in the early stages of his illness” (Lacan 1977, 211). As in Schreber, the cell is an embryonic germ of the larger community of cells, the sentinel of a more noticeable presence of the military state, finding a clear analogue in the Hamburg cell of September 11. Here, Schreber’s body is that of the U.S. nation-“state” and its collateral citizens, who only begin to notice the germ, the al Qaeda military cell (and their own U.S. military cell), as the event is occurring. Organized within the U.S. global state, the cell takes shape in the former “abroad,” reaching embryonic status upon its solicited permeation of the territorial motherland and incubating there, in the U.S. womb, until its moment of emergence. Acting as a representative of the larger community, the cell undertakes its solicited function and, in the course of its own erasure, actualizes its status as embryo to the end of revealing the fully formed community of cells. This action also serves to illustrate one of the primary benefits of cellular construction for the military state, such construction allowing the elimination of a cell or cells from the larger community at little to no cost to the community. The tangible loss of military agents in suicide attacks is more than offset by the buoyed recruiting that follows, the amorphous community anticipating and preparing for the attack in a regenerative regime which privileges the collective over the individual.

Though typically viewed as inseparable from the larger community of cells, the individual cell is just that, an individual, whose admittedly temporary status is countered by the regenerative tendency of the general cellular community. In Civilization and Its Discontents,
Freud defines the paradox of individuality within the cellular framework in succinct terms: “But the family will not give the individual up” (1961, 50). Despite the tension between the individualized cell, theoretically acting in its own interest, and the community of cells, theoretically acting in the community interest, the cell, itself typically not an individual organization (small groups being the norm), is in that sense a micro-community, gaining proxy individuality as a self-sufficient military agent only as a subset of the community. Its individuality is a temporary distinction, each cell being constituted or reconstituted as dictated by operations, and so the cell itself is temporary, constructed in an approximation of the planned obsolescence of commodity capitalism. Instead of producing demand for the cell-as-product, the approximation of commodity capitalism produces demand for the cellular action-as-product.

Freud’s value to this argument is rooted in his own effort to construct a hybrid discourse of the technical and the ineffable through his focus on cells and the cellular; the function of this argument is the same. Fundamentalism is absent from Freud’s formulation, making its reinsertion a means of fomenting a different discursive practice predicated on dialogue. Freud again clarifies the nature of the individualized cell in “On Narcissism: An Introduction,” where the individual cell embraces its temporary status: “[H]e is only an appendage to his germ-plasm, to which he lends his energies, taking in return his toll of pleasure – the moral vehicle of a (possibly) immortal substance – like the inheritor of an entailed property who is only the temporary holder of an estate which survives him” (1957, 107). The separation wrought by the temporary individualization of the cell is evident in Freud’s distinction between the cell-as-mortal vehicle and the community-as-immortal substance. His distinction doubles the temporary status through not only the temporal lifespan of the individualized, mortal cell, but also its implied subsequent reabsorption into the community iconography as an exemplary military
agent. Once separated and realized as a military agent, the cell-as-agent of the tangential military state is sloughed off of the skin defense, a phenomenon observed by Didier Anzieu: “Layers… play a regenerative role… [and] continually displace the worn-out layers underneath, forcing them towards the surface” (1989, 16). Regeneration therefore includes not only the subsumation of the individual cell back into the fold of the community of cells, but also its temporary visibility in the surfaced layer, which no sooner appears than it is worn out. It is not only the individual cell that works against the death of the community, but also the community that works against the death of the individualized cell, furthering its mission and remembering its service.

By working against the death of the individual cell, the community of cells-as-military state invests in the perpetuation of the community itself, creating an ethic of military statehood that transcends the temporal limitation of the cellular body. Freud analyzes the preservation of the community through preservation of the individual cell at length in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. The germ-cell establishes a reciprocal relationship with the community of cells, as evidenced by its “work against the death of the living substance and succe[ss] in winning for it what we can only regard as potential immortality” (Freud 1962, 40). This immortality is returned to the individual cell in its memorialization and post-mortem contributions to recruiting and the ethic of military statehood. Individual cells even work amongst themselves to further the survival effort: “One cell helps to preserve the life of another, and the community of cells can survive even if individual cells have to die” (50). This interrelation of individual cells under the larger umbrella of the community of cells is evident in the operation of the Hamburg cell. After the forced fragmentation of the cell due to visa difficulties (a cellular meiosis differing from the
typical mitosis of expansion), Ramzi bin al Shibh remains in Hamburg and becomes the point man for financial transactions to aid the post-permeation balance of the Hamburg cell.

Acting in concert, the individual cell and the community of cells work symbiotically, the individual cell contributing specifically targeted actions meant to glorify and further the cause of the community, while the community contributes a formidable fundraising apparatus, required training necessary to certain actions, and direction. Though the collaboration may necessitate the physical elimination of the cellular body, it also ensures the ideological perpetuation of that body in both the body politic of the ethic of statehood, as well as the body of work glorified in recruiting videos and media communiqués thereafter. For Freud, “[t]he germ-cells… are potentially immortal, in so far as they are able, under certain favorable conditions, to develop into a new individual,” to be absorbed, ideologically, into the new generation of newly generated cells, which paradoxically defy the death instinct by embracing the death instinct in combination with the aggressive instinct seen in the solicited event (46). The individual cell, as prime actor of the military state-as-community of cells, thereby transcends its temporal limitations, perpetuating itself through the perpetuation of its ideology as enshrined in the community of cells, an action opposed by the nation-“state,” which attempts to pathologize the individual as a precursor to medicalization.

The individual, as the primary agent of cellular action, is the preferred choice of the military state, but where the military state prizes the independence of the individualized cell, the nation-“state” pathologizes it, preferring a homogenized mass of individuals rendered a community by their similarity, and enabling that pathologization through its own pathologies. Eric L. Santner notes the pathologization of the individual, saying that “[a]mong the diseases contributing to the apocalyptic demise of mankind, the abject signs of which had already become
visible on his own body, Schreber mentions the plague along with several varieties of leprosy” (1996, 57). After the apocalyptic action undertaken by the individual cell, be it the imperialist venture of globalization undertaken by the U.S. military cell or the solicited event of September 11 undertaken by the al Qaeda military cell, its opposite nation-“state” swiftly inscribes a pathology upon the military agent. This pathologization is somewhat ineffective given the frequent elimination of the cellular body in the course of the apocalyptic action, which limits the bodily pathologization to the ideological body (though similar bodies, such as the post-September 11 Arab-American, may bear the brunt of the pathologization).

What often goes unobserved in the phenomenon of post-apocalyptic pathologization is the presence of facilitating pathologies within the pathologizing nation-“state,” as is the case with the post-September 11 U.S. nation-“state.” Benjamin Barber describes these facilitating pathologies, “the pathologies that permit terrorism to grow – including poverty, unemployment, bigotry, resentment, hatred for ‘others,’ and a passion for vengeance” (2003, 197). Rather than offering criticism from some unimpeachable moral high ground, as would seem to be suggested by prevailing ideologies, the U.S. nation-“state” is in essence externalizing its own pathologies through pathologization of the external al Qaeda military state Other, operating in the approved channel of external aggression provided by aggressive victimhood. The mere presence of those internal pathologies, aided by the paranoia of constant observation by the gazing Other, invalidates the pathologization of the post-apocalyptic military agent, though the U.S. nation-“state” does not seem to notice. Instead, it furthers the agenda of pathologization by drawing it into the medical field, medicalizing the problematic al Qaeda military cell so as to calm the collateral citizenry with the implication that, as the cell is now in the medical realm its illness may be cured.
Medicalization as a post-pathologization phenomenon finds its roots in the case of Schreber, and its contemporary manifestation in memorial proposals and elsewhere serves to produce the al Qaeda military cell as a cancer. Santner points to the origins of medicalization in the case of Schreber, arising from his analyst “Flechsig’s ‘nervous system,’” understood as the radical medicalization of all disturbances of the ‘soul,’ their ultimate reduction to anomalies in the hard wiring of the brain, [which] finishes off the subject already moribund at the end of the nineteenth century” (1996, 74). By rendering his psychological experiences as not the apocalyptic charge perceived by Schreber, but rather a series of glitches in the circuitry of the brain, Flechsig draws the already pathologized Schreber into the realm of pure medicalization, denying the histrionics of his apocalyptic event in the process.

This medicalization of the apocalyptic event is repeated in the contemporary manifestation, specifically the World Trade Center site memorial proposal by Michael Sorkin Studio, where “an earth berm surrounds the site with a public viewing platform, creating a modest memorial space” (Stephens 2004, 172). The berm creates the site as a Petri dish writ large, with the remaining rubble serving the role of the attenuated pathogen now under the medicalizing control of the U.S. nation-“state.” The already pathologized al Qaeda military cell here becomes fully medicalized, drawing the apocalyptic action from its earlier location in the domain of faith to the equally absolute domain of science. Scientific faith similarly proposes absolute solutions to problems, while at once reassuring the U.S. nation-“state”’s collateral citizenry that a solution to the al Qaeda military cell “problem” does in fact exist. After a series of pre-September 11 dragnets capture a number of al Qaeda military agents around the world, the U.S. military state concludes that “the arrest also confirmed one of [John O’Neill, FBI agent]’s great fears: al Qaeda cells were everywhere,” pointing to a proliferation, an uncontrolled and
expanding mass of cells that, in the medicalized realm, can only mean one thing: cancer (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 286). Identification as cancer specifies the nature of the al Qaeda military cell, in that sense adding a degree of certainty to the relative flux of al Qaeda military cell perception by the collateral citizen, but also identifying the al Qaeda military cell with a common touchstone for most collateral citizens, the cancer which likely touches their daily lives through a friend or loved one. The al Qaeda cancer proliferates, appearing randomly and managing to permeate even the universal city.

The universal city becomes infected by the al Qaeda military cell which, given its inhabitation of the Void at the heart of the World Trade Center and Freedom Tower, already lies several levels of magnification beneath the city, ultimately allowing the cell to outlive the city. As a subset of the territorial homeland, itself a subset of the U.S. global state, the universal city (again, New York City) is a cell of sorts in the larger organism, a “giant molecule swarming with worms, bacilli, Liliputian figures, animalcules, and homunculi, with their organization” (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 281). This infestation is in accordance with the agenda of pathologization and medicalization of the al Qaeda military cell and its organization.

Daniel Libeskind predicts this infested city in his “Theatrum Mundi: Through the Green Membranes of Space” from The Space of Encounter, saying that “[t]he premonition of the future… is presented here in the form of a city besieged by an unknown infection, an action taking place within the nucleic medium that flows in the bloodstream of architectural thought” (2000, 179). Though erring in his classification of the infection as unknown when it is in fact solicited, Libeskind grasps the architecture of the World Trade Center and Freedom Tower as its point of solicitation. Libeskind’s future is now, or rather then, September 11, the making visible of the infection, the metastasizing of the cancerous tumor, creating a wealth, even an
overabundance, of meaning readable in the tower face and in the rubble, an overabundance that oozes like pus from the rupture of the plane’s impacts. Suitably infected, the universal city is compromised to a dangerous extent and, in its outmagnification by the inhabiting al Qaeda military cell, “the microbe-like, singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress… have outlived its decay” (de Certeau 1988, 96). Though initially invisible to the collateral citizenry via its subtle inhabitation of the World Trade Center as focal point of the magnification of the universal city, the rupture produced by September 11 makes the al Qaeda military cell (and its agenda of making the U.S. military cell visible) visible, necessitating stopgap efforts from the U.S. nation-“state” beyond the obligatory film of images. Rather than leaving the rupture to its own devices, the U.S. military cell attempts a suture that, in its mimicry of the supposedly inferior pathologized and medicalized al Qaeda military cell Other, courts hypocrisy to the point of ultimate self-destruction.

Though attempting to suture the rupture caused by and solicited from the al Qaeda military cell, the U.S. military cell’s appropriation of the methodologies of its creation serve only to obscure the cellularity of the al Qaeda military cell while foregrounding its own cellularity, to self-destructive ends. Paul Goldberger offers a statement in favor of the rupture, saying “I do not believe that the greatest thing we can do here is like perfect plastic surgery, obliterating any trace of a scar” (2004, 250). Goldberger also identifies the suturing efforts as a similarly vain attempt at personal remodeling on the part of the ruptured U.S. military cell. With the failure of the surgical, cosmetic suturing effort, the U.S. military cell turns instead to a stopgap, an effort to plug rather than seal the rupture, though with more force than the film of images, through the formation of the “coalition of the willing” to aid in the externalized “war on terror.” Freud observes the difficulty of this type of coalition in “Why War?” and its conclusion that “[t]he laws
of such an association will determine the extent to which, if the security of communal life is to be guaranteed, each individual must surrender his personal liberty to turn his strength to violent uses” (1959, 276). If the “coalition of the willing” is in fact such an association, then its equality mimics the collective individuality of the al Qaeda military cell, producing the U.S. military cell as a pathologized, medicalized, and cancerous cellular Other.

Malise Ruthven locates the origin of capitalism and its importance to the U.S. military cell in “the institutional forms and legal mechanisms invented by Western Christianity” (2002, 253). Ruthven centralizes Christianity to the point where the U.S. military cell becomes a Christ-cell, endowing the effort towards pathologization and medicalization with religious fervor. The adoption of the cellular methodologies of the al Qaeda military cell Other render hyperbolic reactions to and targeting of those methodologies as “a kind of speculative immune reaction to the attacks, doing its own damage more efficiently than al-Qaeda could have,” a self-destruction brought on by mimicry of the very solicited agents actively sought to realize the intended aims of the U.S. military cell (Barber 25). This hypochondria, this creation of illness where none exists, finds its realization in the logic of perpetual war, as extrapolated from the agenda of pathologization and medicalization. The cell allows for a certain disposability of the individual that allows the continued viability of the community, a capacity which is contrary to the character of the homogenizing nation-“state,” and as such is subject to pathologization, medicalization, and stigmatization under the auspices of the newly visible cellular adopter.

Illness and Hypochondria

The perception of illness in hypochondria spurs the withdrawal into aggressive victimhood, a desire and solicitation of such illness that makes the agenda of pathologization and medicalization the stigmatization of the internal pathologies of the U.S. military cell as
externalized onto the al Qaeda military cell. Freud points to the operations of the hypochondriac in “On Narcissism,” specifically the tendency to withdrawal: “The hypochondriac withdraws both interest and libido – the latter specially markedly – from the objects of the outer world and concentrates both upon the organ which engages his attention” (1957, 109). Interest, temporarily withdrawn from the larger imperialist venture to the more specific al Qaeda military cell-as-fulcrum of reformatted, PNAC-influenced imperialism, is internalized upon the organ of interest, the inhabiting al Qaeda military cell and its infestation of the body of mother America. Freud elsewhere outlines the solicitation of such illness in the case of the Rat Man, who “[maintains] that he had only wished her [his partner] to be permanently ill so that he might be relieved of his intolerable fear that she would have a repeated succession of attacks!” (1962, 194) Substitute mother America for the partner, the U.S. military cell for the Rat Man, and one is left with a vision of a U.S. military cell that, fearful of successive attacks on mother America, solicits her illness from the pathologized, medicalized al Qaeda military cell so as to relieve and actualize its fear in perpetual war.

The group coalescing around the Al Quds mosque in Hamburg subscribes to a similar belief that “the community of Muslims [is] a body, and if Muslims anywhere [are] hurt or attacked, it [is] as if the body had a fever. Not to fight to cure the fever [is] a sin” (McDermott 2005, 88). Where the Al Quds group differs is not in its formulation of the hypochondriac’s illness, the Muslim body also soliciting attack in its commission of the solicited event of September 11; rather, the difference comes in the answer to this question from Deleuze and Guattari: “How then does one explain the fact that capitalist production is constantly arresting the schizophrenic process and transforming the subject of the process into a confined clinical entity, as though it saw in this process the image of its own death coming from within?” (1992,
Simply, the U.S. military cell produces the al Qaeda military cell-as-pathologized, medicalized, and cancerous Other through its globalizing aims, solicits the operation of that al Qaeda military cell in the event of September 11, and then stigmatises its operation to form a more perfect globalization, necessitating its eventual removal.

**Dispersal and Removal**

Dispersal, like that seen in the debris cloud of the collapsed World Trade Center, creates problems for those trying to remove the dispersed materials. In the case of September 11, this dispersal enables the heightened visibility of the previously subtle inhabitation of the al Qaeda military cell, as well as its agenda of making the U.S. military cell equally visible. Jonathan Safran Foer returns the debris cloud from the viral to the human, through the description of Thomas Schell Jr. as “cells… on rooftops, and in the river, and in the lungs of millions of people around New York” (2005, 169). Foer also places the metaphor and reality at a comparable level of size, if not significance. For the al Qaeda military cell, the debris cloud is a deliberate scattering (though the scale was somewhat unexpected), a diasporic response to the diaspora of the hated Zionist military state (before the creation of Israel). A similar characterization appears in Santner (via Freud) as “so many forms of the instinctual renunciation (Triebverzicht) that undergirds the rule of law in the most general sense, [which] procure for the Jews what he calls ‘their secret treasure,’ namely a sense of self-confidence and superiority with regard to pagan cultures whose spirituality has remained, as he puts it, ‘under the spell of sensuality’” (1996, 122). The al Qaeda diaspora yields not only visibility for itself and the U.S. military cell, but also the secret treasure of the Islamist faith viewed superior to its jahili surroundings, the many virgins awaiting martyrs in paradise.
Such movement is essential if the al Qaeda military cell is to garner any degree of visibility for itself and the U.S. military cell outside of its subtle inhabitation, and in fact is aided by the movement to monumentalize evident in the Freedom Tower. As James E. Young asks in “Memory/Monument,” the question is “[t]o what social ends have [people] been moved, to what historical conclusions, to what understanding and actions in their own lives?” and the answer, for the al Qaeda military cell, is towards a realization and awareness of the U.S. military cell beneath the U.S. nation—“state” and the abuses it has perpetrated (2003, 246). One further mimicry of the al Qaeda military cell by the U.S. military cell, other than movement-as-monument, is the post-September 11 “impulse to decentralize and spread corporate staffs across wide geographic areas,” an impulse that results in a cellular structure of dispersed groups, much like that of the al Qaeda military cell (Goldberger 2004, 58). Once the nature and scale of the dispersal are evident, the U.S. military cell must adapt to the unusual conditions, though its initial efforts at response simply repeat the “bigger is better” ethic of the now irrelevant past.

Sometimes the first instinct is the best instinct, and sometimes, as in the post-September 11 largesse of the U.S. military cell response that plays right into the al Qaeda military cell agenda of visibility, it is not. The key is being able to tell the difference. Returning to the first stage in the metaphoric progression, the initial response of the U.S. military cell is to ensure that “the parasite must be isolated and destroyed (counterterrorist preventive war) or the host body must be made inhospitable to the parasite” (Barber 2003, 152). What characterizes each of these options is the application of considerable military force, a characteristic that neatly satisfies both the necessity of mobility for the military state, as well as the specific U.S. military cell concern with a reformatted imperialism best applied by the military in full. Such force has been the trademark of the U.S. military state, including actions where U.S. “advisors” trained proxy
forces, those proxy forces gaining provisional status as U.S. military agents (reinforcing the internal nature of September 11 as the work of formerly U.S.-funded *mujahideen*). Though the current use of force is somewhat lighter on its feet than in the past, that is largely a product of technological, rather than tactical, advances.

Continuing with the parasite metaphor, Ellen Meiksins Wood quotes Paul Wolfowitz’s 1992 discussion of military force in terms of “full spectrum dominance,” language which references the broad spectrum pesticides used in commercial farming to prevent infestation (quoted in 2003, 159). That this term was conceived in 1992 and still finds relevance today is telling, considering the considerable changes in the world in that time period, and indicates the dated tactics used by the U.S. military cell, tactics better suited to the Cold War than the Called War solicited on September 11. However, the U.S. military cell is not wholly oblivious to its strategic intransigence, and slowly but surely, it begins to adapt to the new protocols of military action as dictated by its own efforts at globalization. Again, the first instinct is not the best instinct, as the whole cloth assumption of cellular action (questionable as an assumption given the export of stigmatized cellular organization to the al Qaeda Other, though what is exported is more stigma than cell) does not perform the necessary work of vetting the assumed tactics before assumption. Instead, the Called War begins with the U.S. military cell’s assumption of cellular tactics, takes form in the solicited act of September 11, and culminates (eventually) in the contradiction of U.S. military cell action along cellular lines simultaneous to its own fervent stigmatization of all things cellular.

In attempting to remove the dispersed al Qaeda military cell through either brute force or clumsily assumed cellularity, the U.S. military cell ends up isolating itself in a realm of faux cellularity that carries all of its stigma and none of its benefits. Freud concludes that “the sick
man withdraws his libidinal cathexes back upon his own ego, and sends them forth again when
he recovers,” a conclusion that creates problems for the U.S. military cell-as-agent of perpetual
war (1957, 109). If the U.S. military agent, as a hypochondriac, not only covets war, but actively
solicits it, then recovery is an unwanted outcome, making the isolationist withdrawal of a
perpetual reality, and therefore distancing the U.S. military cell’s clumsily assumed cellularity
from the typically embedded nature of cellular action. Instead, what results is the U.S. military
cell embedding cells in itself, both the informants of the PATRIOT Act and the military bases
within the U.S. global state. Each cell is subject to the agenda of pathologizing, medicalizing,
and metastasizing, and breeds illness within the U.S. military cell and U.S. nation-“state” that
requires no cellular Other. However, assumption of the cellular continues from its origins in the
Afghan war of the 1980’s.

At that time, despite denying knowledge of supervised heroin trading in the region, “the
CIA not only had knowledge, it actually started a special cell that ‘promoted the cultivation of
opium and the extraction of heroin… [to be] smuggled into the Soviet-controlled areas in order
to make the Soviet troops heroin addicts’” (quoted in Unger 2004, 108). The U.S. military cell
here constructs a cell for the explicit end of developing pathological addiction in the Soviet-as-
cellular Other, a problematic proxy usage of the cell writ large in the use of mujahideen as proxy
soldiers. Similarly, “[b]eginning in 1984, the Centers for Disease Control began providing
Saddam [Hussein]’s Iraq with biological materials – including viruses, retroviruses, bacteria,
fungi, and even tissue that was infected with bubonic plague” (69). This more grievous
misappropriation of the cellular, rather than combating the cellular on its own terms, provides it
(the Iraq military cell) with substantial weaponry, then later counters it with conventional, Cold
War-style invasions. As such, the U.S. military cell is pathogenic, medicalized, and cancerous,
yet also immobile, a sitting duck for the solicited attack from the stigmatized al Qaeda military cell whose subtle inhabitation enables it to attack the immobile U.S. conscious from a position of unconscious mobility. In its efforts to ensure the dispersal and removal of the al Qaeda military cell pathogen, the U.S. military cell only makes itself more visible as a flawed cellular agent through its disproportionate and inappropriate application of force and piecemeal adoption of cellular methodologies.

II. Unconscious

The cellular is an unconscious of sorts, an observable yet ultimately unpredictable locale that is the source of great wonder and great pain, and as such remains largely reclusive and unattainable to the U.S. military cell-as-analyst. Jean Baudrillard similarly locates the al Qaeda military cell, calling it, in relation to the disbelieving pre-September 11 U.S. military cell, “some obscure force that would wipe them out and which, until that point, merely existed in their unconscious” (2003, 62). Locating the al Qaeda military cell in the unconscious, Baudrillard is at once noting its inhabitation of that realm as a permeation of the skin defense solicited by the U.S. military cell, as well as the perpetual presence of the Other in the unconscious, at just enough of a remove from the U.S. military cell conscious to provoke exotic fascination and external repulsion.

Once emerging in the solicited event of September 11, or rather gaining a more widespread visibility, the al Qaeda military cell begins to exercise the trademark mobility that lay dormant for so long in the sleeper stage of the cell’s existence within the territorial U.S. nation-“state.” Jacques Lacan grasps the problematic nature of this mobility in The Four Fundamental Principles of Psycho-Analysis: “[T]he unconscious is the elusive – but we are beginning to circumscribe it in a structure, a temporal structure, which, it can be said, has never
yet been articulated as such” (1981, 32). Lacan’s statement refers not only to the mobility that facilitates the continued existence of the al Qaeda military cell, and in fact defines that existence, but also the U.S. military cell’s feeling that it may quantify, temporalize (within a limiting linear historical narrative), and even appropriate the cellular ideology. Given its presence as the inhabitant of the internal Void inside the conscious U.S. nation-“state” (if not also the military cell), the al Qaeda military cell must operate at a low profile, emerging only to perform actions solicited and unsolicited so as to preserve the mystique of the cellular, with which it may then associate the U.S. military cell in the act of making its abuses visible. Again, Lacan understands “the need to disappear that seems to be in some sense inherent in it [the unconscious]” (43). This need compliments the necessary mobility of the cellular formation of the military state by turning the pattern of occasional appearance into a strength, a pattern suggestive of more appearances to come. This disappearance indicates a purposeful closing up on the part of the al Qaeda military cell, a closing up that not only aids mobility, but also the agenda of making the U.S. military cell visible.

Disappearance, especially in the period leading up to a solicited event, enables the larger al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious to take advantage of the flawed adoption of the cellular on the part of the U.S. military cell which, only capturing the ego of the superego-ego-id structure of the unconscious, cannot prohibit, instead soliciting events which ultimately reveal it. Lacan discusses this tendency to closure on the part of the al Qaeda military cell, identifying “[t]he transference [as] the means by which the communication of the unconscious is interrupted, by which the unconscious closes up again,” anatomizing the failure of the U.S. military cell (130). Transference is the means by which the U.S. military cell adopts the cellular approach from the al Qaeda military cell. At least in terms of the cellular function, the U.S. military state cell is
fond of the al Qaeda military state cell. The first nominally cellular action of the U.S. military cell, the solicitation of the event of September 11 from the al Qaeda military cell, interrupts the U.S. military cell adoption of cellular methodology through its fulfillment of the al Qaeda military cell agenda of making the U.S. military cell visible, while its own cell maintains a low profile, returning to fight another day.

As only a partial assumption of the larger al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, the U.S. military cell gains only the ego portion of the unconscious structure, allowing it the illusion of control beneath the superior guidance of the superego. This illusion of control operates without realizing al Qaeda military cell inhabitation of the superego, id and, ultimately, the ego through the eventually compromising visualization of the U.S. military state. Paul Virilio notes the ineffectuality of the ego in *Ground Zero*, discussing the “*[s]overeignty of the ego* placed at everyone’s disposal” by its prohibition to prohibit, its inability to disallow the actions of the Other and, in the case of September 11, to actively solicit them (2002, 6). With the only partial assumption of the cellular, the U.S. military cell ego is rendered ineffectual by the lack of force behind its possible prohibitive ability which, despite the possession of significant military force, is unable to act once its spiritual basis, the fictive ideologies of the U.S. nation-“state,” have been exposed as fictive by the solicited event itself. The U.S. military cell ego is then simply a part of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, one portion of the larger structure that, by virtue of its partiality, is unaware of the operations of the larger structure. Due to its claim to nominal authority, the U.S. military cell ego feels all the more powerless when the events that it solicits end up turning out in an unexpected manner more beneficial to the unconscious than the ego.

Simply one portion of the larger structure of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, the U.S. military cell ego aspires and reacts to structures outside of its immediate control, making
its aspirations to the ego ideal of the al Qaeda military superego a flawed adoption of the cellular
formation made evident in the visualization of its abuses. Freud locates the formation of the ego
ideal in the influence of parental criticism in “On Narcissism,” for the purposes of September 11
the internalized father (Ramzi Yousef, George H.W. Bush, Nachman Libeskind) as superego
which, when transposed onto the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, yields the al Qaeda
military cell as father. Freud notes that “[r]ecognition of this institution enables us to understand
the so-called ‘delusions of observation’ or, more correctly, of being watched, which are such
striking symptoms in the paranoid diseases” (1957, 118). Though characterized here as an
internalization of the ego ideal, the U.S. military cell is in fact internalized by and internal to the
al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious. By simply performing a flawed adoption of the cellular,
for the U.S. military cell, “[a] threatened external unhappiness – loss of love and punishment on
the part of the external authority – has been exchanged for a permanent internal unhappiness, for
the tension of the sense of guilt” (Freud 1961, 75). Adoption of the cellular draws the U.S.
military cell into the realm of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, creating a touchpoint for
the collapse of imperial pseudo-benevolence and the emergence of the al Qaeda military cell
already internal to the U.S nation-“state.”

Victimized by its own shortsightedness (a fittingly courted victimhood), the U.S. military
cell performs a hyperbolic misperception of the al Qaeda military cell superego-as-ego-ideal,
what Lacan defines as “the moral conscience… [that] shows itself to be the more demanding the
more refined it becomes, crueller and crueller [sic] even as we offend it less and less” (1992, 89).
The U.S. military cell takes out on its collateral citizenry in the PATRIOT Act what it cannot
take out on the larger al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious. Lacan adds that “[a]t the level of
the… functioning unconscious, something regulates itself that tends to exclude the outside
world,” and that something is the outside world itself, the former U.S. global state (51). In its flawed adoption of the cellular, the U.S. military cell becomes a mere portion of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, returning the seclusion returned to it by the pre-September 11 al Qaeda military cell in a self-destructive fashion.

The U.S. military cell ego is now subject to the analysis of the al Qaeda military cell as provisional analyst rendered so not through a complete inversion of the analyst-analysand dynamic, but rather the act of speaking through the analyst, reframing the discourse in terms favorable to the al Qaeda military cell. Tariq Ali observes that “[d]reams played an important role in pre-Islamic Arab culture and interpreters were highly sought after” (2002, 57). This focus on dreams permits the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, an Islamist organization dedicated to a return to the early days of the Caliphate, to analyze itself, the unconscious being the location of dreams. In fact, this meta-analysis allows the observation of a specific portion of the unconscious, the U.S. military cell ego, and a specific dream within that portion, the fictive American dream so central to U.S. nation-“state” ideology.

This first reframing of discourse is compounded by the second reframing, which adjusts the process of narrativizing the time of the solicited event itself. Anzieu contends that “[f]or the system Ucs. [unconscious], time does not exist (hence the sense of an Ego without either beginning or end, of an immortal Ego)” (1989, 91). Anzieu points to the will of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious to denarrativize time and its historical referents, revealing the U.S. military cell ego as without end or immortal only in a fictive sense revealed by the fracturing and atemporalizing actions performed on historical time in the course of denarrativization. The unconscious is persistent in its efforts to gain a selective visibility while selecting to visualize the U.S. military cell ego, and Lacan illuminates “the indestructibility of unconscious desire – in the
absence of a need which, when forbidden satisfaction, does not sicken and die, even if it means
the destruction of the organism itself” (1977, 167). Rather than simply wilting under the
pressure applied by the U.S. global state during its brief period of viability, the al Qaeda military
cell-as-unconscious pushes forward with its desire to make both itself and the U.S. military cell
visible, to the point of destroying the organism, the conscious itself, in the subsumation of the
U.S. military cell to the ego. The means by which the unconscious achieves this destruction of
the conscious are many, but perhaps the chief among them is language, the early manifestation of
the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious in the soon to be partitioned U.S. military cell
conscious before its conversion into the ego. As the unconscious, the al Qaeda military cell is
able to maintain its mobility and revelatory potential, leading to U.S. military cell misperception
of its position as ego and the al Qaeda military cell as ego ideal and resulting in the willful
solicitation of an event that ultimately proves contrary to the aims of the U.S. military cell.

Language

First visible through the linguistic structure of the unconscious, the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious uses language to transform the U.S. military cell into a visible entity, revealing
the hypocrisy of its assumption of cellular methodologies. Lacan defers to Freud on this matter,
noting that “Freud tells us that the thought processes are only known to us through words, what
we know of the unconscious reaches us as a function of words,” and establishing the linguistic
realm as a space of the unconscious (1992, 32). At this point, the language which conveys the
unconscious is largely tolerated by the conscious through which it filters, language acting as an
approved channel of external aggression for the unconscious, though its sense of victimhood is
more genuine than that of the aggressive victimhood usually associated with approved
channeling. The implied distance and separation between the linguistic apparatus and its
perception by the conscious suggests not only the sense of a distant Other consistent with the imperial U.S. global state, but also the primary stage of the phenomenon of aggressive victimhood. Language emerges through approved permeations of the skin defense, allowing a magnified conscious so as to facilitate a reassertion of the reformatted global state.

However, this possible instance of aggressive victimhood implies solicitation of the language on the part of the conscious, an implication undermined by Freud’s statement, in the case of Rat Man, that “the patients themselves do not know the working of their own obsessional ideas” (1962, 223). Freud also hints at the degree to which the al Qaeda military cell Other has been fetishized by the U.S. military cell, both as a foe of the efforts towards a U.S. global state, as well as a tactical locus of the skills needed to achieve its reformatted realization. From the perspective of the U.S. military cell, what results is a state of aggressive victimhood in which the U.S. military cell solicits a victimizing linguistic event from the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious who, though capable of undertaking such action, is unable to do so in the U.S. global state without direct solicitation. Instead, there is a state of linguistic rupture where the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, fully capable of performing a victimizing event like September 11, seizes its solicitation as a moment of self-definition, establishing itself as the victimizer not only in the solicited event of September 11, but also the victimizing of the U.S. military cell into a position of ruined conscious that leaves it only a small portion of existence, the ego, to call its own. Language thus acts as a rupturing agent, its solicitation by the U.S. military cell conscious being quickly subsumed by the self-defining effort of the al Qaeda military cell unconscious, over which the conscious has no control.
The Use of Metaphor

Stigmatization through patholigization and medicalization smells as sweet by any number of names, and accordingly the stigmatization efforts enacted by the U.S., a pande(m)ic state in its creation, export, and solicitation of illness, as well as the proliferation of its Christ-cell, operate under a number of metaphors, the first being viral, parasitic medical waste. The use of metaphor serves as a conscious characterization of the linguistic unconscious, a flawed attempt to control the linguistic unconscious by drawing it into the linguistic realm of the conscious. In the penalty phase of Ramzi Yousef’s trial, as recounted in Reeve, the judge calls his treatment “no different than that accorded to a person with a virus which, if loosed, could cause a plague and pestilence throughout the world,” establishing the al Qaeda military cell as a viral agent, al Qaeda as E.coli or Ebola, and therefore necessitating the quarantining action of prison (quoted in 1999, 243).

Plague language appears again in Lacan, this time in reference to the psychoanalytic and Oedipal plague brought by both the al Qaeda military cell father/son and Freud and Jung on a trip to Clark University, where Freud states “[t]hey don’t realize we’re bringing them the plague” (quoted in 1977, 116). The trip broadens the scope of the viral agent to transcontinental reach. This reach is then extended from undefined infection to a specific locus in Baudrillard, where “[the viewer] ha[s] been inoculated with the realist virus of the image, and the retrovirus of image-playback,” connecting the viral metaphor to the earlier phenomenon of repetition (2001, 145).

From the unicellular, microscopic virus, the al Qaeda military cell is then enlarged into the multicellular parasite, “likened to a pest or parasite, such as the mosquito, which needs stagnant waters or a swamp to breed in” (Ruthven 2002, 25). The mosquito is an apt example of the multicellular parasite, and also of the al Qaeda military cell in its feeding on and possession
of the contents of the host. Regardless of the shift from the unicellular virus to the multicellular parasite, the pervasive mobility of the al Qaeda military cell remains, making it and its fellow cells “mobile parasites who live in host bodies but can move from host to host as they infect and destroy the systems off which they live” (Barber 2003, 117). At this point in the metaphoric progression, the al Qaeda military cell is still relatively primitive (perhaps a deliberate effort meant to further stigmatize the al Qaeda military cell as a primal, savage Other), and its pathologization places it squarely within the field of medicalization, allowing a less problematic means of disposal through either the medical cure or typical hospital protocol. After the Afghan war of the 1980’s, “the Afghan Arabs became, in euphemistic spook parlance, a ‘disposal problem’” (Reeve 1999, 3). Though Reeve is incorrect in terming the disposal problem euphemistic, as the parlance is metaphoric, his statement does make the al Qaeda military cell-as-virus or parasite something beyond mere medical waste (as disposal implies destruction, a fate only befitting a formidable foe). Rather than being controllable via quarantine or the cure, the al Qaeda military cell is something more advanced than the unicellular virus or the multicellular (though not terribly complex) parasite.

Despite the fact that the al Qaeda military cell is not controllable in this metaphoric formulation, actually being solicited as an illness through this formulation, other, more complex, formulations are attempted with differing, higher level organisms. Before disappearing completely from the radar, the medical waste metaphor appears once more, though the flies it fails to attract point the way to bigger things to come, literally and figuratively. When discussing the insular nature of the Atta family during their time in Cairo, neighbor Mohamed Gamel Khamees chooses these words to describe the impenetrability of their apartment: “Not even the flies entered there… Not even the flies” (quoted in McDermott 2005, 14). Khamees’ statement
illustrates either the potency of the viral, parasitic medical waste accompanying Atta as a soon-to-be al Qaeda military agent, or perhaps the failure of the viral, parasitic medical waste metaphor to capture the true evil of the al Qaeda military cell as envisioned by the U.S. military cell. However, flies, themselves no strangers to the realm of the Other, often seen circling around waste of all sorts, provide a link in the metaphoric progression between the unicellular virus and the simple multicellular parasite to higher levels of complexity. Flies, like de Certeau’s walker, serve as unconscious markers of the abject. Therefore, the above example is somewhat problematic from the perspective of the U.S. military cell given that Atta, as the agent of the pathologized, medicalized, cancerous al Qaeda military Other, should be marked by the flies, but is not. This failure to mark signifies the new uselessness of medical metaphor, discarded in favor of the fly’s winged compatriot, the locust.

Osama bin Laden uses this metaphor in his 1998 fatwa, criticizing “crusader armies spreading in [the Arabian Peninsula] like locusts, eating its riches and wiping out its plantations” (267-8). Bin Laden’s statement installs the locust as not only a higher level parasite, a more complex multicellular organism than the parasite or fly, but also a religious referent. Tellingly, locusts are one of the seven plagues of Egypt, and given the importance of Egypt to al Qaeda as both the ur-civilization and the homeland of many of its top agents, including Mohamed Atta, September 11 becomes the unleashing of a plague. The event is thus the divine act of holy warriors crazed in their devotion to the task charged by God, a task that in turn creates the U.S. nation-“state” as doubly elect, first as the “city on a hill,” the ethical beacon to the world, and second as the chosen victim of a divine act (which also erases the responsibility of solicitation). As a more complex metaphor, the locust furthers the progression from the medical realm to the
spiritual realm of metaphor, a realm that will receive one more passing glance before the metaphoric progression thrusts itself irrevocably into the realm of the machines.

The last stand for the spiritual metaphor lies, somewhat indirectly, in the plant world, though a form of plant whose pervasiveness finds a parallel in the domain off the machines which, in a neat turn, ultimately approximate the virus. Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon quote an unnamed Pentagon intelligence official discussing the varying al Qaeda military cell metaphors, who says that “[t]hey keep likening [al-Qaeda] to a snake, but it’s more like a deadly mold,” pointing to a pervasive form of plant life that grows on all surfaces, if given the right conditions (quoted in 2003, 453). Plants, as a chief part of the natural world, engage in its status as the cathedral of God, nature being God’s creation (in the view of the euphemizing U.S. military cell and its Christ-cell), making the moss above and grapes below the end of the spiritual metaphor.

Al Qaeda’s cellular organization receives its final spiritual metaphoric (and also euphemistic) treatment in a document comparing “the self-contained cells… [to] ‘bunches of grapes’ which made up the Islamist groups, so that if one were ‘plucked’ it would not affect the others,” restating the reciprocity of individualized cells and the community of cells (Ruthven 2002, 185). The pervasive nature of mold, able to occupy any available space, provides the link from the spiritual metaphor to the non-spiritual, the machine, which is equally pervasive: “The surface… swarms with them, as a lion’s mane swarms with fleas” (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 16). Deleuze and Guattari’s statement provides a useful link back to the viral, parasitic medical waste metaphor first used by the U.S. military cell and now revived in the face of pervasive “chatter” and the swarming planes of September 11.
This link is taken further back by the rebuilding proposal for the World Trade Center site submitted by Eisenman Architects. A series of individual buildings apply standard forms but, “[a]s they descend to meet the ground plane… their individual cores fold, collapse, and congeal,” suggesting the debris cloud of September 11 produced by the meeting of standard forms and the machines (the planes) that grind against the building faces (Stephens 2004, 129). In its mimicry of the flowing debris cloud, a contagious swirl of powdered World Trade Center whose pervasiveness is evident in the persistent lung problems of first responders, Eisenman’s design approximates the virus, the plague, dispersed through the air in microscopic form and which, once lodged in the body, does not let go easily. The cellular itself is just such a metaphor, and its use illustrates the flawed efforts of the U.S. military cell to appropriate the methodology of the al Qaeda military cell without understanding the unconscious aspects of that methodology.

The linguistic unconscious serves as a powerful medium of opposition for the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, which seizes the linguistic apparatus with abandon, utilizing “chatter” in a manner suggestive of the unconscious but conducive to the conscious. John Miller, Michael Stone, and Chris Mitchell relate the case of Siddig Siddig-Ali, “a tall, elegant Sudanese man… [known] as Abdel-Rahman’s translator… [who] said he was planning a series of bombings,” who offers a unique vision of the linguistic unconscious (2002, 113). Himself a linguist of sorts due to his translating ability, Siddig-Ali is also an agent of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious in his service to Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, making his linguistic ability an entrée into and function of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious. This simple act of speaking of a plot is, in the realm of “terror,” enough to realize its ends, making speech alone a “performative utterance… one that brings about its own propositional content,” with the
commission of the actual action discussed existing as a second performative utterance related to, but separate from, its enunciation (Santner 1996, 11).^5

Miller, Stone, and Mitchell offer another example of the performative utterance “in the FAA manual requiring English fluency for pilots” shown to hijackers Khalid al-Midhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi in flight school (2002, 272). The insistence on fluency creates the linguistic realm as not only a locus of control for the conscious over the unconscious, but also a site for al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious revision of the approved English in favor of its own linguistic insertion, the “chatter”^6 that motivates the U.S. military cell to assume cellular formation. The power of the “chatter” is evidenced in the post-September 11 period, where “[a]larm bells started going off beginning in early March… [t]he call level was high again, peaking to the same levels it had reached before September 11,” the simple existence of “chatter” setting off alarms in a way deemed largely harmless before the event (322). “Chatter” therefore exists as a superficially unconscious manifestation of the linguistic unconscious, its fragmented, shadowy nature placing it beyond the reach of consistent perception, making it an ideal site for the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious to seek rupturing capability. However, since the linguistic unconscious ultimately allows the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious to say its piece in the space unwittingly provided by the U.S. military cell in the act of solicitation, it becomes a site for realization of the conscious as well, an al Qaeda military cell inhabitation of the former status of the U.S. military cell.

If the linguistic unconscious functioned only to create ruptures in the conscious, it would be a marginally qualified failure operating only within approved or approvable channels. Instead, by broadening those ruptures through an unapproved seizure of agency within the solicited action, the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious actualizes the collapse of the U.S.
global state conscious, reducing it to the U.S. military cell ego while creating an occupiable vacancy in the conscious position. Lacan articulates this process (in concise terms) as “that chattering by means of which we articulate ourselves inside ourselves” (1992, 62). He references “chatter” as a means of articulating before the fact the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious that exists after the solicited event, defining from inside the conscious what will soon be the conscious. The solicited event therefore acts as an opportunity for the actualization of this “chatter” not only in the sense of the literal rupture performed by the planes and the collapse they engender, but also by the eventual collapse of the conscious towers into the simple ego of rebuilding and memorialization efforts.

Santner locates “chatter” in the case of Schreber, “the hearing of voices… the excess of demands… purified of any instrumental value or meaning-content, a kind of pure and nonsensical ‘You must!’ abstracted from the use value of any particular activity” (1996, 135). This “chatter” acts as an excessive demand on the part of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, beyond the bounds of the channel approved for the solicited event of September 11, a multiplicitous hum at once cleansed of value and content. “Chatter” exists in and of itself as a “terror”-provoking performative utterance, and also a hum ripe with value and content as the linguistic realization of the collapse-inducing rupture. September 11 is thus, above and beyond any literal damage caused, an event solicited by the U.S. military cell conscious in ignorance of the true capability of the al Qaeda military cell-as-linguistic unconscious. Anticipated as an approved collateralization of a few to the greater benefit of reformatted imperialism, September 11 is ultimately realized as the unchecked expansion of the approved channel of permeation resulting in the collateralization of the U.S. military cell conscious. This realization reduces the
U.S. military cell conscious to the ego and elevates the al Qaeda military cell to dual status as both internal and external, unconscious and conscious, as the grand result of a simple speech act.

September 11, as a speech act, exists transformationally, linking the U.S. military cell to its now visible abuses while also motivating a renewed and equally flawed assumption of the cellular by that cell. In a transcript of an al Qaeda video released on December 13, 2001, Osama bin Laden confirms the status of September 11 as a speech act, concluding that “[t]hose young men [the hijackers]… said in deeds, in New York and Washington, speeches that overshadowed all other speeches made everywhere else in the world” (Venzke 2002, 103). Those speeches are delivered with a specific aim in mind, a speech Lacan identifies as “moving towards nothing less than a transformation of the subject to whom it is addressed by means of the link that it establishes with the one who emits it – in other words, by introducing the effect of a signifier” (1977, 83). As in Lacan’s formulation, the September 11 speech acts move towards a transformation of the U.S. military cell to whom they are addressed, linking the U.S. military cell forever to the al Qaeda military cell. The speech act also creates September 11 as a signifier whose signified includes not only the approved narrative of the U.S. nation-“state,” but also the abuses of the U.S. military cell as made visible by the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious.

Faced with the linguistic power of “chatter,” the U.S. military cell, already a cellular failure, chooses to adopt “chatter” so as to preempt its force, much like Schreber “finds a way to meet his symptoms on their own terms and thereby gain a modicum of mastery over them” (Santner 1996, 93). However, the “chatter” adopted by the U.S. military cell proves ineffectual, its manifestation in the cordoned murmurings of law enforcement agencies prior to and during the investigation of September 11 simply obscuring in a way that “chatter,” with its rupturing capacity, clarifies. The U.S. military cell ego also attempts to utilize the fragmenting
denarrativization of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, acting as “a weapon to resist its [speech’s] recognition… fragmented in that it bears speech, and whole in that it helps in not hearing it,” and thereby receiving, fragmenting, and distorting speech to its own ultimately misguided ends (Lacan 1977, 137). Though flawed assumption of the cellular is highly problematic for the U.S. military cell, perhaps its greatest misstep is the quest for the ego ideal, as mentioned above, a violent and self-destructive decision. The metaphoric trajectory from unicellular to multicellular, from insects to plants, and finally to “chatter” and the event as a performative speech act illustrates the ineffectual control of and eventual hasty adoption of the cellular by the U.S. military cell, whose limited understanding of the form proves its undoing.

III. The Body Without Organs

Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of the body without organs in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is of great relevance to the post-September 11 eviscerated homeland of the U.S. nation—“state,” though in terms that differ from theirs. They posit that, “if we say that capitalism determines the conditions and the possibility of a universal history, this is true only insofar as capitalism has to deal essentially with its own limit, its own destruction – as Marx says, insofar as its is capable of self-criticism (at least to a certain point: the point where the limit appears…)” (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 140). Indeed, this is a useful opening statement to clarify the body without organs relevant to September 11. The body without organs is produced as the limit of capitalism, the pinnacle of a categorical deterritorialization of the world via the initial effort at creation of a U.S. global state and subsequent intended reterritorialization of that imperial space through the reformatted, PNAC-friendly imperial agenda of the U.S. military cell. As such, it must exercise considerable control over the flows present within the globalized realm, especially ideological flows, like that of the al Qaeda
military cell, which may challenge its Oedipal foundation. So long as mother America is safe, so long as the solicited event is merely an interaction between the U.S. nation-“state” ideology and its Founding Fathers and the al Qaeda military cell and its mujahideen as sons of the CIA, all is well.

However, the al Qaeda military cell becomes both son of the CIA and father of the erroneously magnified U.S. nation-“state” and its collapse into the ego, seed of and seed for mother America. Mother America is now both mother and, through al Qaeda military cell inhabitation and evisceration, (m)Other. When the U.S. military state becomes less a father of the U.S. global state than a son of the unkillable al Qaeda military cell, Oedipus collapses, and so does Deleuze and Guattari’s reconceptualization of Oedipus. Rather than maintaining the Oedipal trinity and adding the phallus, the September 11 Oedipal re- (or rather de-) construction is more complex; the father becomes the son after the failure of aggressive victimhood, the mother becomes the (m)Other and therefore approximates the original son, the al Qaeda military cell, and the son becomes the fatherson, creating the U.S. military cell as its son while remaining the son of the U.S. military state. The dual son blocks continued Oedipality by rendering response a father’s murder of the son, an Oedipal impossibility. Thus prepared, the body without organs staged by the initial inhabitation of mother America is then set upon by machines, producing a multiple gaze.

Machines, through their attachment to the body without organs, create a multiple gaze that erases the image of the U.S. nation-“state,” a gap that the U.S. military cell attempts to fill through the solicited reformatted imperialist venture, a failed post-September 11 reconception evidenced by Afghanistan and Iraq. Rather than the unitary gaze of the body (now) without organs, the machines offer a broader range of different gazes. Santner details Schreber’s many
organ afflictions, the manifestation of both the body without organs and the arrival of the machines, including “‘little men’ placed in my feet… the compression-of-the-chest-miracle… [and] ‘the hand-compressing-machine’” (quoted in 1996, 65). These organ machines seem to attack in swarms, suggesting the earlier parasitic metaphor (or perhaps even the locusts), seizing on the flesh of mother America, now hollow and ripe for external attachment and also further inhabitation along the lines of the original subtle al Qaeda inhabitation. As the mother is increasingly overwhelmed by organ machines, her vital functions, eviscerated by the September 11 collapse of the U.S. military cell conscious into the ego, are similarly replaced by those offered by the organ machines, turning the mother into less of a mother and more of a (m)Other.

Each of the organ machines also brings an individualized perspective to the inhabitation of the mother, “each organ-machine interpret[ing] the entire world from the perspective of its own flux, from the point of view of the energy that flows from it,” nearly reinscribing the imperialist aims of the U.S. global state, though with one important difference: competition (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 6). True, the al Qaeda military cell has the inside track by virtue of its early inhabitation and triggering manifestation on September 11, but that inside track merely allows the al Qaeda military cell to prepare the mother America body without organs for the collectivity of organ machines, itself included. Where each of the organ machines has a point of interpretation, and therefore also has a gaze, enabling it to develop its own image in relation to its surroundings, the body without organs “has nothing whatsoever to do with the body itself, or with an image of the body… [i]t is the body without an image” (8). Though arising from the original body of mother America as conceived by fictive U.S. nation-“state” ideology (more of an idea than a material, territorial body), the mother America body without organs bears little resemblance to the original. Its literalized evisceration produces mother America as a blank for
external projection; though always a blank for external projections, now both the mother and the projector have changed, as a result of the return of the deterritorialized.

Once those deterritorialized by the capitalistic, globalizing force that creates the body without organs, namely the U.S. military cell, are freed from that deterritorialization in the gap generated by September 11 between de- and reterritorialization, they return to territorialize the territorializer in a cellular fashion. For Deleuze and Guattari, “[t]he body without organs is not an original primordial entity that later projects itself into different sorts of socius” (33). Rather, the body without organs is the product of a capitalism that “tends toward a threshold of decoding that will destroy the socius in order to make a body without organs and unleash the flows on this body as a deterritorialized field” (33). The body without organs instead suggests mother America and, here, the U.S. military cell, a threshold in its status as a tangential entity that is willing to collateralize large populations in the name of liberalizing economic and ideological flows in the realm of deterritorialization. This maternal suggestion makes the post-collapse move from conscious to ego the U.S. military cell’s shift from a body without organs, mother America, to an organ without a body, the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious.

Reterritorializing organs also take on the shape of an apparatus, “a collection of elements or organs, manufactured or natural, put together in such a way as to achieve some practical end or to fulfill a biological function” (Anzieu 1989, 71). They therefore bring an elemental anger to their task as organ machines, whether somewhat manufactured like the mujahideen of the early al Qaeda military cell, or wholly manufactured like the film of images.

The organ machine, as a more complex, highly adapted permutation of the cellular form, is immediately attractive to those kept in the proverbial waste bin of unicellular organisms. Libeskind notes this fact: “Organs frequently titillate the learned, who wear glamorous clothes,
knockout style, to protect themselves. The city with body power in plentiful supply will eventually replace lascivious visions with its own hot spots” (2000, 32). Libeskind’s organs are of interest to the imperialized, cellular veterans, who gain access to them through the assumption of glamorous clothes, like the planes of September 11. The organs approach the city with body power, here New York City as the universal city of the fictive U.S. nation-“state” ideology of mother America, replacing the lasciviously unilateralist World Trade Center with the hotspots of the rubble. The body without organs, once beset upon by scores of organ machines, attempts to reject the Oedipal complex that it feels is motivating them, in the process eliminating the one ideological support that, while spurious, may have bought enough time for substantive ideological revision.

In the confusion of the U.S. military cell collapse from conscious to ego, the cell perceives its foundational Oedipal complex as the problem, and subsequently attempts to erase it from the ideology of the U.S. nation-“state,” though it reappears in the Freedom Tower. As Deleuze and Guattari conclude, “[t]he full body without organs is produced as anti-production, that is to say it intervenes within the process as such for the sole purpose of rejecting any attempt to impose on it any sort of triangulation implying that it was produced by parents” (1992, 15). This formulation makes the limit of capitalism the undermining of the foundational Oedipal complex, a detriangulation inherent to the U.S. military cell and capitalized upon by the tangential al Qaeda military cell. Oedipus produces “the schizo’s withdrawal to the body without organs,” the continued identification with mother America despite her status as an empty sign, while mobilizing the U.S. military cell for the unique degree of movement it allows, beyond the Oedipal stasis endemic to the U.S. nation-“state” (80). The body without organs, a cellular locus given its attraction of organ machines, also attracts the refugees of the collapsed
U.S. military cell who, in a last ditch attempt to adopt the cellular as a means of perpetuating the ideologies of the now eviscerated U.S. nation-“state,” transfer the fantasies of those ideologies to it. The group fantasy “passes into the body of the other on the body without organs,” making the final courting of the cellular the final subsumation of the U.S. military cell ego to the al Qaeda military cell unconscious (63).

Even the body without organs, as the product of capitalist deterritorialization, takes a stab at rehabilitating mother America by scrapping Oedipus and its hijacker son: “[T]he body without organs reproduces itself, puts forth shoots, and branches out to the farthest corners of the universe” (10). This is the appearance of the reformatted imperialist venture, operating from a goalless, power-hungry position of PNAC influence, and even using the failed body without organs as a means to an end. Despite its best efforts to sabotage the one remaining ideological foothold available to it, the U.S. military cell reasserts Oedipus in the Freedom Tower, as seen in Libeskind’s *Breaking Ground* and its claim to the difficulty of rebuilding: “Forget Rubik’s Cube. This was more like surgery in which you have to replace a defective organ while keeping a network of veins and arteries pumping” (2004, 164). Libeskind at once admits the failure of the World Trade Center while involuntarily reinscribing it in a mother America with intact organs, the reproduced Freedom Tower serving as an incestual success story. The body without organs, as the product of the hollowing, collateralizing effort of the U.S. military cell, attracts organ machines whose multiple perspectives and desire to reterritorialize the deterritorialized space, problematizing the Oedipal root of its ideology.

**Prostheses**

Within the body without organs, the organ machines serve as prostheses, the solicited agents of Oedipal destruction for the U.S. military cell, and the complex tools of the more
properly cellular al Qaeda military cell. Freud asserts that “[w]ith every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning,” a continuous quest towards operational perfection endemic to the military cell in general (1961, 37). The U.S. military cell, itself an organ in parasitic dependence on U.S. nation-“state” ideologies, seeks perpetual war as a means of evolution, and attempts to jumpstart the process by hastily and poorly adopting the cellular form. The al Qaeda military cell positions itself as a tool of Allah, a divine organ that attempts to achieve a perfect Islamic world, beginning with the inhabitation of mother America. Both military cells pursue a similar evolutionary perfection, operating as prostheses of the divine agent responsible for their election.

This divine assertion also merits attention in Freud, in a passage where he notes the problematic nature of organs as prostheses: “Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to him and they still give him trouble at times” (39). Man-as-prosthetic God, as an ideology, certainly appears in the varying notions of divine charge surrounding September 11, as do the auxiliary organs, best characterized by the planes, which perfect the al Qaeda military cell organ, yielding a magnificence that results in trouble only in the early termination of Flight 93. That ideology also appears in U.S. military cell creation of mujahideen for the 1980’s Afghan war and failure to control them thereafter.⁸ As Deleuze and Guattari observe, “[p]artial objects are the direct powers of the body without organs, and the body without organs, the raw material of the partial objects” (1992, 326). In layman’s terms, the organ machines, including the U.S. military cell, are the direct powers of the mother America body without organs, enabling actualization of destruction of her fictive ideologies, and it is that body without organs that enables the organ machines to gain visibility, whose evisceration necessitates their presence.
Any nation-“state” may be viewed as such a body without organs, its fictive ideologies forming a smoothe exterior that obscures the Void within, and its partial object, the military state, holds any power invested in that territorial habitus. Prostheses thus function as divine agents who are drawn to and draw from the eviscerated body without organs that necessitates their presence. However, the swarming, prosthetic organ machine is not the only type of machine present at the surface of the body without organs; Daniel Libeskind provides a series of machines which, rather than the marginal defense of the partially parasitic military cell organ, are intended purely for defense.

**Libeskind’s Machines**

Libeskind’s machines, conceived in 1985 for a project titled “Three Lessons in Architecture,” act as a nominal defense against the organ machines like the al Qaeda military cell organ, though a defense less concerned with confronting the organ machines directly than obscuring the visibility of their operation. Cloaked in the language of education, Libeskind offers “the three lessons of architecture: A) reading architecture, and its equivalent, the reading machine; B) the lesson in the present remembering architecture, and the memory machine; C) writing architecture, and its equivalent, the writing machine” (1992, 38). The pedagogical methodology evident in Libeskind’s articulation points to simple regurgitation, in which that which has come before is memorized and repeated, as is the case in his architecture. Libeskind also locates the origin of each machine, “straight out of faith… [as] a political measurement… [and in] [t]he machine” respectively, tying the reading machine to religion, the memory machine to politics, and the writing machine to industry (42). In relation to September 11 and their role as nominal defense, these machines only operate after the fact, in an effort to reframe the event as flawless and predicted rather than slipshod. The machines attempt to frame the response in terms
of a divine election supporting pseudo-benevolent imperialist reassertion, of a politicized, linear narrative of history in which the event is purely victimizing (not solicited), and with regard to the reinscription of unilateralist, globalization-favoring narratives of industry, as manifested in the military-industrial boom from perpetual war and the architectural frenzy of rebuilding.

The obscuring capacity of these machines is not lost on Libeskind, who says that the memory machine, perhaps the most vital of the three given its position as political and therefore military agent, “consists of the backstage only – the spectacle takes place wholly outside of it” (51). By omitting the spectacle, Libeskind offers a deliberate exclusion despite its status as the constitutive manifestation of the solicited event, meant to be a puppet show of faux vulnerability and made hyperbolic in the film of images. Speaking of the writing machine, important as the final step in reindustrialization and reterritorialization, Libeskind asserts that “this ‘unstable’ prototype is extremely agile – having no natural flight path. It jumps around the text’s sky and is guided by an ‘active control system’ which can perhaps never again disclose its starting position” (56). Here, Libeskind’s prototype mimics the deviant flights of September 11, guided by military agents with their transponders turned off to obscure their origins and destinations. The adoption and mimicry of the flight characteristics of September 11 indicates an adoption of the cellular, Schreber’s meeting of the enemy on its own terms, which is ultimately ineffectual against the organ machines. Within the flawed adoption of the cellular, the U.S. military cell is then left with only one response to its solicited event gone haywire: unilateral force, exactly what the al Qaeda military cell wants. To obscure its own cellularity, the U.S. military cell must respond with overwhelming force in a traditional manner, an effort that is doomed to failure in the globalized world.
Though the intent of Libeskind’s machines is to act as a nominal defense against the organ machines, his machines bear a revisionist tendency and cellular approximation that renders them not only failures as defensive measures, but also organ machines themselves. Deleuze and Guattari observe that “[m]achines attach themselves to the body without organs as so many points of disjunction, between which an entire network of new syntheses is now woven, marking the surface off in coordinates, like a grid” (1992, 12). This statement implies a limited multiplicity of organ machine types. By marking the surface off in coordinates, in a grid-like fashion, the organ machines mimic the cartographic imperialism exercised by the U.S. global state and its post-September 11 analogue, the U.S. military cell, eliminating the possibility of a purely or even nominally defensive presence by reinscribing the flawed cellular adoption undertaken by the U.S. military cell.

Libeskind’s machines, as a supposed intermediary, only serve to obscure the operation of the U.S. military cell organ as an organ machine, feasting on its own mother America from whom it was so recently eviscerated, divorcing themselves from the spectacle while aiding in its solicitation and also providing the conditions for its collateralizing ethic, formalizing the division between the U.S. military cell agent and the collateral citizen. As a means of resisting the organ machines, “the body without organs presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier” (9). Such a surface could be none other than the U.S. military cell, supposed defender of its territorial habitus, the U.S. nation-“state,” but who is instead concerned only with defending the spoils of the collapse of the U.S. nation-“state” from other interested organ machines. Rather than attempting to repel the organ machines from mother America, the U.S. military cell son (of mother America and father al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious) is merely performing a flawed Oedipal conquest. Realizing the impossibility of patricide when faced with the unkillable al
Qaeda military cell, the U.S. military cell son instead chooses to consummate the relationship with mother America, though doing so with the knowledge that the mother-father relationship continues unscathed (as evidenced by the mother America body without organs’ initial repulsion of the U.S. military cell). The organ machine thus becomes a locus of protest, a place where the abuses of the U.S. military cell may be revealed and where that cell itself may lodge a protest against the contra-cellular limitations of its fictive ideologies. Libeskind’s machines facilitate this protest by obscuring and approximating the operation of the organ machines, and are accompanied by the U.S. military cell organ machine while doing so.

**The Organ as a Locus of Protest**

In its active solicitation of the victimizing event, the U.S. military cell, still primarily located within mother America-as-U.S. nation-“state” at this point, draws the apocalyptic event towards the eventual body without organs (present as such before the event but only revealed as such after), reinforcing the notion of September 11 as an internal solicitation and creating the body without organs as a locus of protest. Deleuze and Guattari describe the body without organs as “the deterritorialized socius, the wilderness where the decoded flows run free, the end of the world, the apocalypse,” seemingly describing the locale of the externalized Other in a way that points to inhabitation by the al Qaeda military cell (176). As a limit, the body without organs is subject to interaction with tangential military cells, often in solicited actions such as September 11. Faced with a globalization which had reached the end of the world in an unsatisfactory format, the body without organs necessitates an apocalyptic act as a means of formatting, requiring the consultation of the fantasized externality of the al Qaeda military cell Other who is in fact internal via its presence as a globalized entity and inhabitant of the U.S. nation-“state.” Freud notes in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that “some sources of excitation,
which [the adult] will later recognize as his [sic] bodily organs, can provide him with sensations at any moment, whereas other sources evade him from time to time – among them what he desires most, his mother’s breast – and only reappear as a result of his screaming for help” (1959, 14). Theoretically, the U.S. military cell may solicit sensations from its bodily organs at any time, the al Qaeda military cell as an organ via its cellularity and as internal via its inhabitation. However, as an Other source, the al Qaeda military cell is also evasive in its expansion of the approved permeation of the skin defense, eviscerating mother America and making the U.S. military cell’s desire for her breast the source of its cellular assumption and event solicitation. Accordingly, the body without organs becomes a locus of protest, initially the protest of the U.S. military cell at the hijacked solicitation of September 11 as the evisceration of the mother, a mother that the U.S. military cell attempts to access by assuming cellularity and organ status and preserve for its own not as a defensive measure, but rather as a will to establish parasitic singularity.

Despite its efforts to regain the mother eviscerated by the al Qaeda military cell on September 11 through adoption of the cellular and organ status, the mother and her body without organs ultimately act as an overarching locus of protest, rejecting the U.S. military cell organ in protest over its ideological compromise. Anzieu notes that “[i]n a great number of illnesses, the system of immunological defence can be activated indiscriminately to attack one of the body’s own organs as if it were a foreign transplant” (1989, 106). Anzieu references not only the immunological self-destruction of trying to attack internal, metaphoric parasites, but also the rejection of the U.S. military cell organ by mother America due to its cellular adoption and subsequent identification as an organ machine. Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari observe that “the body without organs repels the organs and lays them aside: no mouth, no tongue, no teeth – to
the point of self-mutilation, to the point of suicide,” a concise summation of the operation of the mother America body without organs (1992, 329).

Acting as the mouth in its consumptive, territorial imperialism in the quest for the U.S. global state, as the tongue in its literalization of the expedient fictive ideologies of the U.S. nation-“state,” and as the teeth in its ability and desire to apply force, the U.S. military state is then thrust aside, leaving the mother America body without organs bereft of defense. This thrust also forces the now cellular U.S. military cell to look for another way to gain its mother’s breast. For Deleuze and Guattari, “each organ is a possible protest,” and for mother America, the U.S. military cell is a chance for the mother to protect what she views as a perversion of her ideologies, a hollowing out of the already hollow meant only to facilitate reformatted globalization, not to pursue the more benevolent globalization implied by the divine mission of the U.S. nation-“state” (211). Osama bin Laden concludes that the U.S. nation-“state” is an “America struck by almighty Allah in its vital organs,” a statement that is only partially true (quoted in Ali 2002, 2). America may have been struck by Allah, though the strike occurs not in the vital organs, but through the vital al Qaeda military cell organ first internal to the intact mother America, provoking a secondary strike by mother America against the vital organ of the U.S. nation-“state,” the U.S. military cell which allowed the fatal permeation to take place. Protest may be applied from internal to external, from external to internal, and from internal to internal, with the cellularity of the U.S. military cell provoking the application of all three. In its rejection of the U.S. military cell organ, the mother America body leaves itself vulnerable through its act of protest, trading the act of one organ (the al Qaeda military cell organ) for another.
The unconscious language of the cellular finds its manifestation in the speech act of September 11 and, more specifically, in the technologies it uses to create the pervasive ghost voice, a variety that illustrates the overarching power of the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious over the U.S. military cell ego. In *War and Cinema*, Virilio asserts that “the derealization of a battle in which ghosts played an ever greater role – screen ghosts of enemy pilots served to confirm that they had been shot down, and ghostly radar images, voices and echoes came through on the screens, radios and sonars,” pointing to technology as the origin of the persistent, unconscious ghost voice (quoted in 2002, 46). One form of the ghost voice present in the event of September 11 is, appropriately, the cellular phone, essential to hijackers Khalid al Midhar and Nawaf al Hazmi, as noted by neighbors: “[T]hey are constantly using cell phones on the balcony” (Thompson 2004, 167). The cell phone is of particular interest due to its relation to time in “the all-powerful news market – where, as we know, merchandise is valueless after twenty-four hours or twenty-four seconds – [which] has destroyed the notion of *durée*” (Virilio 2002, 49). The cell phone is a technology that at once deemphasizes duration in the plethora of fleeting, unnecessary calls, while also emphasizing duration in the proxy life of September 11 victims in voice mail. Jere Longman offers such an example: “Lyz Glick and her friends called Jeremy’s cell phone number, just to hear his recorded voice. They wondered whether they should leave messages” (2002, 250). That the ghost voice is here considered nearly interactive indicates the agency held by the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious, which claims Jeremy Glick and his pseudo-heroism as a means of inhabiting the iconographic heroism of the fictive U.S. nation-“state.” The cell phone allows a mobility lacking in the land line, while also possessing a storing capacity that postdates the existence of the material phone, where the
messages on a land phone would be destroyed along with the equipment. Perhaps the most well-known and enduring ghost voice of the event, also preserved via the technology of the black box and air traffic recordings, is Mohamed Atta saying “[w]e have some planes” (quoted in Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 8). Atta’s voice is yet another example of a temporary communication act made enduring through the echo, the return of the voice into the unconscious from where it came and which, as the possessor of the superego as well, may use those voices with all due severity. His voice persists through the destructive act, and though his body, the producing agent, no longer exists, its sentiment lingers on in the black box and air traffic recordings.

Though these examples all produce relatively tangible referents via their presence on tape or as digital files, the ghost voice may also take on less tangible forms of language.

Two examples in particular, one drawn from Osama bin Laden, the other from Daniel Libeskind, display the dematerialized nature of the spectral voice, removing all referents to exist purely within the unconscious. Miller, Stone, and Mitchell cite “bin Laden mythology… that he is on the front lines of every Muslim battle,” a presence indicative of the pervasive nature of the ghost voice, while also relevant to the linguistic unconscious from which it springs (188). In this case, the ghost voice acts as an ideological agent, preserving the theoretical position of the agent in the agent’s absence or after the agent’s demise. Bin Laden’s mythology points to an inhabitation of the ideological and iconographic sphere of jihad, his image acting as a proxy Allah, passing orders as a divine vessel and watching over the military agents financially, materially, and spiritually, and also to a similar inhabitation of the American iconographic sphere. Prior to September 11, American iconography was defined in and of itself, not against any other specific ideological specter (Hitler being too outdated and communism too faceless to register in the iconographic field). After September 11, one may not conceive a vision of freedom
without seeing mud-flaps of bin Laden in a rifle sight, of liberty without seeing an al Qaeda military agent in detention at Guantanamo Bay, and of justice without seeing Saddam Hussein, a supposed al Qaeda affiliate, bearded and haggard, in all cases an iconographic inhabitation of the highest order.

Libeskind recounts a similar phenomenon in *Breaking Ground*, what he calls “Jerusalem syndrome, which strikes primarily in the Old City. The victim, usually visiting for the first time, begins to hear voices and perhaps suffer from religious delusions, and then goes mad… It is the mingling of ancient ghostliness and modern holiness that sickens those who suffer from the syndrome” (2004, 203). Rather than realizing its inhabitation at the iconographic level, the ghost voice here inhabits the spiritual level, located at the flashpoint of the events surrounding September 11, Jerusalem and the Palestine/Israel region. As a mixture of ancient Islam and a more modern understanding of the necessity of its resurgence, the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious is once more a sickening agent, the virus causing madness in the unwanted interloper, protecting its own adoptive homeland in the process. Though less tangible than the magnetically of digitally-stored ghost voice, the existence of the bin Laden and Libeskind voices within the unconscious inhabitation of the iconographic and spiritual realms serves to reinforce its pervasive nature. The pervasiveness of this “chatter” creates a democratic inclusion of not only the hijackers, but also the passengers, those in the buildings and, to a lesser extent, politicians.

The democratized “chatter” of the ghost voice includes the hijackers, the passengers, those in the buildings, and politicians, an expression of the linguistic realm which in turn expands the naming of the event of September 11 itself, fracturing the revisionist linear historical narrative. Miller, Stone, and Mitchell first establish the centrality of chatter to the performance
of the linguistic unconscious, noting “a lot of ‘chatter’ on the lines… [m]ost of the conversations… in code” (2002, 322). Here, the use of code mimics the inability to directly access the unconscious, as experienced by the U.S. military cell in its prior incarnation as the conscious/analyst. Once the centrality of “chatter” is clear, the democratization may begin, starting of course with the most well-known and enduring ghost voice, that of Mohamed Atta. Atta’s additional statement to passengers feigns the possibility of an open-ended event while still maintaining nominal authority in the democratized sphere: “Don’t try to make any stupid moves” (quoted in Longman 2002, 37). The hijackers now included, though not to the exclusion of other, be they military agents or not, passengers may be drawn into the democratic sphere, along with those in the World Trade Center, the event having “been described by many of the hijack victims from their cell phones and by people inside the Trade Center… all on tape” as a function of ghost voice-enabling technology (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 318).

Those directly involved in the event of September 11, either in the planes, the World Trade Center, or the Pentagon, all use available technologies extensively, leaving electronic echoes that allow the performance of the linguistic unconscious in the event to persist beyond its initial temporal limitation, and such technology enables George W. Bush to do likewise. J.H. Hatfield observes that in the run-up to the 2000 presidential election, “Bush sent videos detailing his accomplishments to key campaign donors… [u]sing a combination of heroic music, slow motion, and a variety of film formats” (2001, 261). Bush uses a means of dissemination that mimics the tapes of Osama bin Laden, drawing Bush into the realm of democratized “chatter,” while also lending bin Laden some political credibility via their similar tactics. Ultimately, what results from the democratized “chatter” is a response to Otto Weininger, paraphrased in Santner’s statement that “[b]y virtue of being named… no man, apparently, completely escapes
from transference” (1996, 142). Rather than being named as a pathologized, medicalized, cancerous Other, the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious broadens the linguistic field and the relevant actors, making all complicit in and involved with the multiplicitous, denarrativized naming of September 11. The ghost voice, as facilitated by technology, operates as a democratized manifestation of the linguistic unconscious, extending speech beyond the limitations of the material and the temporal.

**The Field of Force**

Technology, which enables the persistence of the ghost voice as a manifestation of the linguistic unconscious, acts as a field of force in response to the imperial force exercised by the U.S. global state, a force evident in the event of September 11. Virilio reminds the reader “that every technology expresses itself in its time as a new field of force,” and it is not just the expression of these technologies that appears on September 11, most of the technologies being fairly standard at the time of the event, but rather a new expression or re-expression of the technologies upon their inhabitation by the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious (2002, 68). The speech issued through these technologies which, apart from the words of the hijackers, reinforces the ideologies of the fictive U.S. nation-“state,” also illustrates their inhabitation, the very medium of communication existing as the domain of the inhabitant. Suffice it to say, the seizure of these technologies as a field of force, including not only the cell phones and voice recorders, but also the planes themselves, the Internet used for planning and ticket purchase, and even the box cutters used to commandeer the planes, is stunning. It is especially so for the collateral citizen of the U.S. nation-“state,” “an overpowerful state suddenly brought up short against its own consciousness – or, rather, against its techno-scientific unconsciousness,” whose own vaunted technology proves its downfall (65).
Shattered by the technological evisceration that reduces mother America to a body without organs and the U.S. military cell from conscious to ego, the U.S. military cell, in its flawed adoption of the cellular, is unable to respond not to the general force levied against it, but to the specific type of force used. The cellular abilities of the U.S. military cell are hampered by a continued focus on lumbering, massive response. Such an inhabitation of these technologies by the al Qaeda military cell renders those technologies “bombs which keep on exploding in people’s minds, generating ever more complex and extensive accidents, creating that ‘uncanny identity which always makes it seem that actions are reported before they are performed, often the mere possibility of an action’” (quoted in 2002, 22). Technology, once the pride of the postmodern U.S. nation—“state,” has now been turned against it. However, because of the utter dependence of the pre-September 11 U.S. global state and the post-September 11 reformatted imperialist venture on such technologies to maintain its hegemony in a world immune to the military force of the U.S. military cell, this technology cannot be discarded, allowing the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious to inhabit it, creating an explosive linguistics with September 11 as its manifestation.

This explosive linguistics yields an al Qaeda military cell that, unlike Libeskind’s architectural grammar and its unilateral reinscription, speaks in a sinister voice, each word a performative utterance tipping the balance of power in the favor of the Other. In “Daniel Libeskind: Welcome to the 21st Century,” Libeskind is credited by Charles Jencks with “working through his own grammar… exploring a grammar, a lot of [which]… does break the customary rules” but, in its unilateral reinscription, the grammar is hardly new and, after its inhabitation by the al Qaeda military cell, is hardly his either (“Daniel…” 2000). By seizing Libeskind’s architectural voice, the al Qaeda military cell appropriates the force implicit in its unintentional
unilateral assertion, reframing it as a field of force for the Other, its asymmetry made possible by
the very technologies which now inhabit it. The al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious therefore
manifests itself in a sinister voice, the relatively harmless, even polite voice of Atta being
transmuted, through association with Libeskind. In an instance of religious stigmatization in the
documentary “Portrait of a Terrorist: Mohamed Atta,” Atta’s voice becomes the ominous voice
of the muezzin as an incomprehensible Other, signaling the call to war (Coombes and O’Connor
2002).

Despite attempts to stigmatize it, the al Qaeda military cell’s control over the technology
persists, and in some cases predates the solicited event considerably. During a sting operation
undertaken to broaden knowledge of the network in which he operates, Ramzi Yousef, a prisoner
in the most secure prison in the country, “uses the sting operation for his own ends,
communicating with terrorists on the outside in code language without giving away their
identities” via a telephone given to his for that purpose (Thompson 2004, 16). Yousef, as not
only the hunted, but also the captured, manages to turn technology to his advantage in a way that
George W. Bush is not on September 11 where, as Stephen Mansfield notes that “the president
was obliged to record his message [to the American people] in a bare room over a herky-jerky
digital connection. He looked and sounded like the hunted, not the hunter” (quoted in 2003,
131). The balance of power thus altered, the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious and its
linguistic manifestation, though stigmatized, remains effective under all conditions, while the
U.S. military cell ego and its speech is subject to editing by the al Qaeda superego, limiting any
force that technology may carry for the U.S. military cell. The al Qaeda military cell produces
instead an absence that, while also present in the ghost voice (its referent being necessarily
absent), endows it with power and the U.S. military cell with weakness. It is this opening that
creates space for critique, including this argument. Mastery of technology enables the al Qaeda military cell to seize it as a field of force immune to the adoptive efforts of the U.S. military cell, and to wield it the technological dependence of the U.S. military cell against it to great effect.

**Absence**

Absence characterizes the ghost voice, its technological and often temporal remove being necessary to its ghost status, but absence does not limit the ghost voice, instead allowing the al Qaeda military cell-as-unconscious a considerable degree of linguistic leeway free from most observation. In “The Names-of-the-Father-Seminar,” Lacan offers a definition of the ghost voice, “the product of and object fallen from the organ of speech, and the Other is the site where ‘it’ – ça – speaks,” a locus of absence, articulation, and misarticulation (2001, 108). The ghost voice is also distinguished by a certain unwillingness or inability to speak, as seen in Atta’s stoic demeanor: “[O]ne could not imagine Mohamed laughing, or laughing out loud” (Coombes and O’Connor 2002). In that sense, combined with Lacan’s vision of a speech of similar absence, sparing articulation, and as perceived by the imperialistic U.S. military cell, misarticulation, the lot of the ghost voice seems to be a poor one.

Žižek seems to value the ghost voice above the approved voice of the U.S. nation-“state” when he says that “we ‘feel free’ because we lack the very language to articulate our unfreedom” (2002, 2). What he is really saying is that illusory freedom remains so because its language is beyond our grasp, necessitating a linguistic intervention if true freedom is to be achieved. The approved voice is subject to a delusive freedom, a handicap worse than mere stigmatization in its curtailment of the realization of servitude through that very servitude, while the ghost voice, through operating from a position of presumed lack within the Void, actually inhabits that space, allowing its linguistic emissions free reign with only marginal oversight. Foer grasps the beauty
of the unobservable ghost voice where “the closer you look, the less you see” (2005, 293).

Analyzing the ghost voice therefore becomes a process where less is more, where a sense of the greater “chatter” outweighs that of any single message, a capacity in which the U.S. military cell is sorely lacking. Absence grants the ghost voice a weight and import that presence never could. Thus, the cell persists despite the death of one of its individualized community members, surviving euphemization as an illness or worse, outlasting efforts at removal and counter-dispersal. By locating itself in the unconscious, the cell is able to avoid detection and, once choosing to seek visibility, to unseat the U.S. military state, whose flawed approximation of the cellular formation facilitates its slide from overarching conscious to subject of the al Qaeda military cell superego. Once the U.S. military state collapses into the U.S. military cell ego, mother America is eviscerated, then seized upon by organ machines, including the U.S. military cell organ who, in its approximation of the cellular, is turned away by its own mother. For the U.S. military state, it is not over until the ghost voice sings.

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2 This discussion is referring to Freud’s discussion in “Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis” from The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume X (1909) (James Strachey, ed. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press Limited, 1962: 153-249), specifically its focus on the wish of death for the father and the associated guilt. The Rat Man’s guilt results in an obsessional neurosis around a punishment involving a rat that bears relevance to a discussion of the cellular and cellular pathology, the rat being typically associated with illness as a vector.
4 Freud and Jung’s trip to Clark University is a landmark in the history of psychoanalysis, as up to that point the discipline was viewed as something of a fringe pursuit. Given Clark University’s rather esteemed position as the owner of the premier doctoral program in psychology, the invitation and subsequent lectures functioned as a confirmation of Freud’s life’s work and a validation of the viability of psychoanalysis in general. The lectures also served to bolster Freud’s status as a public figure within a new American audience.
5 J.L. Austin, Jacques Derrida, and John R. Searle have engaged in a lengthy discourse around speech acts, wherein Searle defends Austin’s Speech Act Theory against the criticisms of Derrida. Austin and, in his defense, Searle argue that a distinction could be made between normal and parasitic uses of language (parasitic referring to uses that require a prior understanding of the conventions of normal uses of language), while Derrida argues that no such distinction is possible (between, for example, the literal and the metaphorical). The essential texts which delineate the shape of this debate are the following: for Austin, How to Do Things With Words (The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955. 2nd ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà, eds. Cambridge: Harvard University

6 This “chatter” resembles that experienced by Schreber in Freud’s “Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoide)” from *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XII (1911-1913)* (Ed. James Strachey. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press Limited, 1962: 3-82), recalling Schreber’s “‘miracled birds’ or ‘talking birds’… [who] have been brought to the condition of repeating ‘meaningless phrases’” (35).


8 The clearest articulation of the U.S. military cell’s creation of mujahideen and failure to control them thereafter appears in Steven Coll’s *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (Reprint edition. New York: Penguin, 2004), where Coll chronicles the CIA’s ill-advised use of Afghan warlords such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. These warlords were supplied with weapons and cash with little oversight and, after the hasty withdrawal of U.S. support after the Soviet withdrawal, later used these weapons against the West in the current Afghan conflict and in other Islamist operations.


Conclusion

I. General Parental Relations

Freud concludes in “On Narcissism: An Introduction” that parental love is non-objective, and that parents are “impelled to ascribe to the child all manner of perfections which sober observation would not confirm” (1957, 115). Freud therefore creates a situation where the parents, in their fallacious efforts to not only describe the child as perfect, but also to perfect the child beyond the limited conditions of their own upbringing, are in fact overbearing to the point where the child feels a necessity to free themselves from the parental grasp. Mohamed Atta, George W. Bush, and Daniel Libeskind act on this necessity in their attempts to free themselves from Ramzi Yousef, George H.W. Bush, and Nachman Libeskind, respectively. Locating the manifestation of this necessary separation, wherein the child (specifically the son in the Oedipal configuration) is concerned with “freeing himself from the parents[,] only after [which]… he can cease to be a child and so become a member of the social community,” is of crucial importance (Freud 1996, 248). Freud locates the separation in the performance of the Oedipus complex, a process whereby the son may gain entry to the world, as the U.S. military cell attempts to in its reformatted globalization and the al Qaeda military cell does in its becoming a viable agent on the global stage.

Still, the Oedipal performance, though theoretically liberating the son, does “not open the path to jouissance that the presence of the father was supposed to prohibit, but it, in fact, strengthens the prohibition” (Lacan 1992, 176). Lacan’s assertion makes the Oedipal act less one of the newly inscribed son-as-agent than of the reinscription of the father. Generational perpetuation ensues where, despite their efforts at differentiation, Atta’s work recalls that of Yousef and inscribes bin Laden, George W. Bush’s work inscribes that of George H.W. Bush in
the first Gulf War, and Daniel Libeskind builds in the way that Nachman desires. This
generational perpetuation, despite Libeskind’s assertion that “the sins of the fathers cannot be
held against the children” in Breaking Ground, holds the sins against the children through the
paternal reinscription inherent to the failed Oedipal enterprise (2004, 101). As memorials to
September 11, 2001 appear, be they the celebratory ones of the al Qaeda military cell or the
disingenuously victimized ones of the U.S. military cell, the father returns in each case, spurring
not only the realization of the Oedipal failure but, somewhat counterintuitively, a renewed effort
towards Oedipal completion.

Enemies of the past become, in the reinscription of the father, enemies of the present,
creating in the son an urge for violence directed not only at the enemies of the father, but also the
enemy as the father, whose enactment eventually leads to a compromised Oedipal father. Gilles
Deleuze and Félix Guattari pinpoint the root of the perpetual memory in the initial repression by
the son: “It appears that, in the common social field, the first thing that the son represses, or has
to repress, or tries to repress, is the unconscious of the father and the mother” (1992, 276).
Within the unconscious of the father and mother, specifically that of the father, lies the enemy-
as-Other, prohibited from entering the conscious, and therefore carried forward in the incomplete
repression of the paternal unconscious. As the enemy is carried forward, and the enemy is
typically the object of exercised, organized force, the son is “in a state of unconscious
identification with his father, who had seen many years’ service,” as seen in Freud’s discussion
of Rat Man (Freud 1962, 210). This identification is true of each of the dyads given Yousef’s
years of service to jihad for the nascent al Qaeda military cell, George H.W. Bush’s service
during World War II and later as commander-in-chief, and Nachman Libeskind’s self-
positioning as, in his sheer survival, an opponent of the Nazis and their Holocaust. Lacan cites
Erwin Rohde’s discussion of *Oedipus at Colonus* from his *Psyche*, where “Oedipus is pious. He was from the beginning in *Oedipus Rex*, but in his distress he turns savage,” illustrating the conversion of the Oedipal son, already faced with the near impossibility of Oedipal performance, to a state of anger at not only the paternal enemies, but also the paternal enemy, the father (quoted in 1992, 285). Such anger drives the son to actions of self-annihilation where “he doesn’t die like everybody else, that is to say accidentally; he dies from a true death in which he erases his own being” (306). Such individualized deaths recall the varied suicides of Atta the hijacker, George W. Bush the facilitator of the permeated homeland and collapsed nation-“state” ideologies, and Daniel Libeskind of the reinscribed father who, in his necessary involvement with the inhabited iconography of the fictive U.S. nation-“state,” is subject to a repeated pseudo-Holocaust in the treatment of death on September 11. In each case, the anger of the thwarted Oedipal son results in a father who, though carried forward as an identifier of enemies and in generalized reinscription, is also compromised in the son’s suicidal action, creating not so much the Oedipal failure, but rather an altered and qualified Oedipal success.

Suicide exists as a means of self-erasure, rather than the forced irrelevance of the father as compromised by the Oedipal performance, though its production of Oedipal success is not unqualified, as its enactment creates a space of provisional preservation for the father. Freud identifies, within the anaclitic type of maternal object-love, an object choice, within the son, of “[t]he man who protects,” implying a recognition of the father as protector, as military agent, as commander-in-chief, as a leader in any sense of the word (1957, 114). What results in Santner is the father as *führer*, traumatizing the son “by a series of aggressive orthopedic and pedagogical interventions and controls” (1996, xi). Santner establishes both the fascistic nature of fundamentalist formations, as well as the complete control of the father which necessitates the
Oedipal performance, no matter how slim its chances of success may seem. In the face of such a force, the Oedipal son seems insignificant, minute, even cellular, achieving a means of performance in this very irrelevance, a mobility that, though pathologized and medicalized, enables the suicidal venue as a means of compromising the Oedipal father.

This father-as-führer implies a title in its Nazi referentiality, a name-of-the-father of sorts that, once compromised, opens the field of successes to the son’s seizure of agency, as seen by Lacan: “[A]fter the failure of the Name-of-the-Father was opened up, that is to say, the failure of the signifier in the Other, as locus of the signifier, is the signifier of the Other as the locus of the Law” (1977, 221). As the father’s derogatory signifier, “son” is erased in the Oedipal suicidal performance, the son’s actual signifier, “father in waiting,” is actualized, creating the son as the new locus of law. However, the Oedipal suicidal performance is not an unqualified success, as evidenced by the case of a young Palestinian suicide bomber named Izzidene, whose mother “spoke of her regrets, [while his father] simply shook his head and walked away. It was clear that he and his wife did not see Izzidene’s actions the same way” (Davis 2003, 132). Izzidene’s mother laments the death of her Oedipal suitor, while the father, in this case not the direct target of the Oedipal performance, celebrates his good fortune at having been spared his Oedipal fate. For suicide to function as an Oedipal success, it must be directed towards the father via a compromise of the mother, or else it is simply a misdirected action of little overall import to the parental dyad.

Instead of the simple Oedipal trinity of mother, father and son remaining intact in the course of the Oedipal performance, the trinity collapses due to the exchange of roles, making the son’s success not the mere erasure of the father, but rather the erasure of the Oedipal dynamic as it is typically known. In the Oedipal trinity, roles are clearly defined, with “the mother as the
simulacrum of territorially, and the father as the simulacrum of the despotic Law, with the slashed, split, castrated ego [as the son],” the territorial mother as homeland being the necessary site of Oedipal performance against the fictive nation-“state” ideologies of the father as Founding Father (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 269). Deleuze and Guattari note that “traditional psychoanalysis explains that the instructor is the father, and that the colonel too is the father, and that the mother is nonetheless the father too,” creating a situation in which the targeted and solicited permeation of the maternal homeland also serves as the Oedipal performance against the pluralized father, the first step in the Oedipal collapse (62).

Rather than the “formula 3+1, the Once of the transcendent phallus without which the terms considered would not take up the form of the triangle,” the al Qaeda military cell has, in its solicited permeation of the maternal homeland, displaced the ideological Founding Fathers of the U.S. nation-“state” (73). In this displacement, the al Qaeda military cell becomes at once the son of CIA-aided mujahideen training in the Afghan war and the father of the cellularly mimicking U.S. military cell, destabilizing the Oedipal trinity through an expansion to include the maternal homeland, the paternal Founding Fathers of the U.S. nation-“state” and the newfound father from the al Qaeda military cell. This expansion also creates the U.S. military cell as cellular son of the al Qaeda military cell, as well as the al Qaeda military cell as son of the CIA-aided mujahideen training, to the point of implosion. Deleuze and Guattari identify but largely ignore such an “Oedipal-narcissistic machine, at the end of which the ego encounters its own death, as the zero term of a pure abolition that has haunted oedipalized desire from the start… 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 – Oedipus is a race for death” (359). Their Oedipus complex creates a space where the U.S. military cell, reduced to mere ego status beneath the al Qaeda military cell inhabitation of the unconscious, is subject to abolition in the race across the sky on September 11. This race is won
not by the tardy fighter response, but rather by the airliners of the al Qaeda military cell whose impacts signal the death knell of the Oedipus complex in its typical formation. The collapse of the Oedipal triad, brought about by the transferred enemy, the name change, and the suicidal act, is ultimately a function of the inhabitation of the (m)Other by the al Qaeda military cell under globalization. Each parental relation bears out this implosion, illustrating the inevitable failure of the complex in the globalized world.

II. Yousef/Atta Parental Relations

For Ramzi Yousef and Mohamed Atta, the paternal dyad, as situated in the details of their respective upbringings and ideological intervention, fulfills the criteria for Oedipal collapse, with Atta’s attempts to eclipse Yousef’s paternal stature resulting in a destabilization of the Oedipal trinity. In his youth, Yousef’s “father’s transformation into a radical Islamist would have deeply affected Ramzi,” establishing the paternal military lineage necessary to invoke the later Oedipal performance (Reeve 1999, 113). Yousef’s inheritance of his father’s enemies through the partial repression of his father’s unconscious finds an interesting manifestation in Yousef’s later actions against those enemies, where Yousef “recruited his own father” as a participant (66). The use of the father illustrates not only Yousef’s positional superiority to his Oedipalized father in the sheer fact that he is able to order his father into such action, but also his use of that advantage to cultivate an Oedipal performance that doubles as an oppositional event, a suicide not of the son but of the father.

Despite the degree of agency secured by this Oedipal victory, Yousef is far from ideal, as seen in his susceptibility to the “‘honey trap’… preying on his weakness for pretty women,” a weakness for the proxy mother evident in his ideological son, Mohamed Atta, as well as George W. Bush and Daniel Libeskind, as will be shown below (59). Regardless of this nominal
qualification, Yousef is, in the period following his masterminding of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and subsequent capture a few years later, a prominent figure of paternal authority. Steven Emerson observes that “[u]ntil he arrived in Sudan, Osama bin Laden’s greatest accomplishment had been his financial backing of Ramzi Yousef,” illustrating Yousef’s considerable stature in the world of jihadis before and even after his capture (2002, 146). So great is Yousef’s influence that bin Laden, first known simply as a patron to the notable jihadi, states in an interview from 1998, after Yousef’s capture, that “America will see many youths that will follow Ramzi Yousef” (quoted in Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 189). Yousef’s paternal value is evident in bin Laden’s post-incarceration faith in his ideological fatherhood, a faith rewarded on September 11 when a group of such young men, inspired by Ramzi Yousef’s devotion to the cause of the al Qaeda military cell, act as Yousef’s youth under the guide of his ideological son, Mohamed Atta.

The youth of Mohamed Atta is less auspicious than that of ideological father Ramzi Yousef, though its end result in September 11 validates the considerable paternal struggles that plague his early years. Miller, Stone, and Mitchell note that Atta “was afforded… few opportunities for socializing… [and] spent his afternoons studying in his darkened apartment,” suggesting Atta as a sheltered, academic youth less inclined to radicalism than the young Yousef under the guide of his father (240). Given his relative cloistering in his parents’ comfortable apartment in Cairo, a certain degree of parental attachment is to be expected, though perhaps not to the degree described in Ruthven: “Even in his twenties the short and slight Atta would sometimes sit on his mother’s lap” (2002, 131). Such attachment to the mother indicates a heightened degree of Oedipal desire for the maternal consummation and, accordingly, Atta’s
father is less than pleased with the apparently pending challenge to his Oedipal positionality, claiming that Atta “was a mama’s boy prone to airsickness” (Thompson 2004, 50).

Though perhaps not the pathologized, medicalized action of the Other demonstrated in the September 11 attack, Atta’s father’s claims of illness and maternal fixation indicate not only a tactical revision of Atta’s Oedipal performance, but also his own desire for the spotlight. This yearning for fame characterizes a father known to one neighbor as “the most arrogant person I ever met” (quoted in Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 241). That Atta’s own eventual Oedipal performance endows him with precisely this degree of fame is no doubt infuriating to his father in its targeted appropriation of paternal power, Atta becoming in the course of his Oedipally implosive action the agent of his father’s, and thus his own, desire. In the documentary “Portrait of a Terrorist: Mohamed Atta,” Atta’s father even indirectly points to Atta’s Oedipal ambition, nicknaming him “Little Bird” and thus pointing to Atta’s later seizure of paternal agency through transformation into a Big Bird, more accurately an airliner, in the event of September 11 (Coombes and O’Connor 2002). Though ultimately successful in his efforts at Oedipal performance, Atta must first travel a rocky road to reach that success, confronting his own maternal fixation and inverting its dynamic to his own advantage, establishing his own paternal agency in the process.

A maternal fixation is an essential part of the Oedipus complex, and Mohamed Atta’s fixation upon his mother well into adulthood certainly satisfies the criteria of the complex, though the degree of his fixation creates the necessity of an inversion to facilitate the seizure of paternal agency. While engaged in flight training in Venice, Florida, Atta is so wary of female contact that, after he “snatched a seat cushion away from fellow student Anne Greaves… [his supposed bodyguard Marwan] al-Shehhi lunged between the two, as if protecting Atta from any
contact with her” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 273-4). This fear of contact suggests Atta’s
evasion as a preservation of the pristine Oedipal love for his mother and her touch alone (Miller,
Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 273-4). However, this preservation is soon compromised by Atta’s
reported relationship with Amanda Keller, a stripper in Venice, Florida. Atta’s initial attempts to
seduce Amanda from her day job at a Papa John’s demonstrate both an atypical romantic streak
for a supposed murderer, as well as an unconscious selection of a mother figure: “And Mohamed
would tell me how pretty I was, and he compared me to a flower that was still closed up, and a
bud that hadn’t yet bloomed” (quoted in Hopsicker 2004, 91). Though he may not have known it
at the time, Keller had two children, making Atta’s departure from his mother a return to another
mother. When becoming angry at Amanda’s drinking in an incident in Key West, Amanda
lashes out at Atta’s paternalism, saying “I don’t know who the hell you are, you’re not my
father,” (quoted in 2004, 96) pointing out Atta’s inversion of the dynamic of maternal affection
that defined his relations with his mother, instead becoming less a son to a mother than a father
to a child (quoted in 2004, 96).

At this point, Atta’s paternalism, already evident in assistance to migrant Muslims while
at school in Germany, where “he served as a bridge between the generations,” blooms in an
unexpected way, eventually driving Amanda away through uneven application of his fatherly
authority (McDermott 2005, 35). In the final document left by the hijackers and possibly written
by Atta (or Abdul Aziz al-Omari, his hotel-mate on the final night), Atta again assumes a
paternal stance, addressing the letter to a hypothetical “young man,” and establishing himself as
his own man, free of both Yousef and his father (Laqueur 2004, 417).

As the name-of-the-father indicates the paternal authority that he holds, by compromising
the viability of the name, Mohamed Atta is able to seize the power from both Ramzi Yousef and
his father, eclipsing both in the event of September 11. The duplicity of Atta’s birth name and that of his father, “Mohamed Mohamed el-Amir Awad el-Sayed Atta… [and] Mohamed el-Amir Awad el-Sayed Atta,” creates Atta as a paternal double, though the repetition of his first name points to an expansion of the patronym, an enlarging of the Oedipal name as a prelude to its collapse (McDermott 2005, 10). Though the likeness of Atta’s name to that of his father is considerable, upon entry into the U.S., the patronym is discarded: “Amir’s visa was issued using the first and last names in his passport. As is often the case with Arabs, neither Amir nor anyone in his family had ever used that last name. In effect, then, when he came to the United States he came as a brand-new man – Mohamed Atta” (194). At this point, the collapse of the patronym is complete, paving the way for the seizure of paternal agency, its minimized length pointing to an implosion and setting up a further parallel to the equally binomial Ramzi Yousef.

With new agency and an unstable name, Atta may adopt identities at will, using that of the architect as part of his cover story, a relative appropriation given Atta’s limited work in the field, and an appropriation that recalls George W. Bush’s geopolitical and Daniel Libeskind’s memorial architectures (Venzke 2002, 39). September 11 serves as a doubled Oedipal performance, addressing the former paternal authorities of his ideological father, Ramzi Yousef, and his blood father, the latter through a skyscraper connection: “It may have been particularly galling to Atta that his own family had moved into an 11th-floor apartment in just such a hulking monstrosity in 1990” (Ruthven 2002, 260). By running an airliner into the World Trade Center, Atta is in essence attacking his father, finishing the job in an epic Oedipal performance that, in its spectacle, eclipses the work of Ramzi Yousef as well. Though the final letter characterizes killing on September 11 as “an offering on behalf of your father and mother,” action is rather an offering against the father and to the mother, the penultimate Oedipal performance that erases
not only the doubled paternal authority of Yousef and Atta the Elder, but also that of the Founding Fathers as U.S. nation-“state” ideologues (quoted in Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 311). In the case of Yousef and Atta, youthful treatment by parents (Yousef’s fundamentalist father, Atta’s indulgent mother) and a shared predilection for women and fluid identities bond the two beyond the simple act of repeatedly targeting the World Trade Center. The performance also eliminates Atta’s related proxy parents, a series of individuals who also lay claim to paternal authority over pre-September 11 Atta.

**Yousef/Atta Proxy Parents**

The various and multiple proxy parents to Ramzi Yousef and Mohamed Atta are all mutual, each parent, in this case each father (save Amanda), acting as either ideological inspiration to or strategic facilitation of later actions like the 1993 and 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center on a descending scale of influential breadth. First on the list is Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a man of considerable influence in the world of *jihad*, as noted by scholar Ziad abu-Amr: “[al-Qassam is] the main source of inspiration for the Islamic Jihad movement… the movement’s first pioneer… the first leader of Palestinian armed resistance… and the true father of the armed Palestinian revolution” (quoted in Emerson 2002, 110). Qassam is thus a great influence to adoptive Palestinians Yousef and Atta. Second on the list is El Sayyid Nosair, murderer of Rabbi Meir Kahane and “the pioneer of a new kind of terrorism, the first to act out the malicious ideology of a rogue strain of Islam that would eventually seek to eviscerate the American way of life” (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 47). Nosair is therefore an inspiration to Yousef and Atta by paving the way for and scouting the location for *jihad* in the U.S. Third on the list, and somewhat more indirectly, is Abdullah ‘Azzam, a prominent *mujahideen* trainer in the Afghan war, whose relation to Osama bin Laden was “part mentor/disciple, part
father/son,” adding another branch of inspiration linking ‘Azzam and economic and ideological inspiration bin Laden (quoted in Ruthven 2002, 208). Fourth on the list is bin Laden alone, whose “eye for the ladies” sets the bar high for Yousef and Atta (as well as George W. Bush and Daniel Libeskind), while also facilitating Atta’s seizure of paternal authority by approving Amanda as a stripper (Reeve 1999, 159). Fifth on the list is Amanda Keller herself who, in her status as a mother of two when she meets Atta, serves as a sort of proxy mother, an artifice that eventually inspires anger in Atta at the loss of his actual mother: “There were a couple of times [sic] he beat her up that I know about” in the words of friend Stephanie Fredrickson (quoted in Hopsicker 2004, 64). Last on the list, and perhaps the most intermingled, is Khalid Sheikh Mohamed, “Yousef’s uncle from Qatar” who aids Yousef in the Bojinka plot, a forerunner of September 11, acting as a proxy father to Yousef via the familial and strategic relation, and perhaps even a grandfather to Atta in the continuation of the foiled Bojinka plot into the September 11 plan (Miller, Stone, and Mitchell 2002, 122). Atta’s paternal line is rich, but his seizure of paternal agency allows him to, on September 11, erase the father entirely and take his place inside and beside the mother.

III. H.W./W. Parental Relations

The early years of George W. Bush also create a desire for Oedipal performance, as the lineage of his father’s father, Prescott Bush, exerts a logic of mimicry on George H.W. Bush, whose ultimate plans to have George W. follow in his footsteps encourage differentiating actions. Craig Unger captures the significant shadow cast by Prescott Bush, a man whose “presence inspired words such as dignity, respect, duty, service, and discipline” (2004, 40). Given the rather imposing presence of his father, George H.W. Bush adopts an approach in which pleasing authority becomes his primary goal, not a desire for Oedipal performance, but
rather a profound aversion to it. Unger quotes a cousin, Ray Walker, a psychoanalyst, who concludes that “[George H.W. Bush] always placated his father… [t]hen, later on, he placated his bosses. That is how he relates – by never defining himself against authority” (quoted in 2004, 45). Rather than choosing an Oedipal mode of self-definition and self-differentiation, George H.W. Bush elects a near non-performance of the Oedipal, instead prizing his father as an ideal to the point where he becomes less his own man and more of an extension of Prescott, an approximation of the Electra complex that will reappear in the discussion of inversion below.

Accordingly, George H.W. Bush sees his relation to Prescott as the norm for paternal dynamics, and desire the same sort of relationship with George W., what George H.W. calls “strength of family… pride… not legacy, and… not handing something down,” (2001, 272) as quoted in Heartbeat: George Bush in His Own Words, yet conceding that “I don’t think it was really hard for me to the degree that I did follow in my own footsteps” (272). George H.W. Bush at once denies his desire to see his son repeat his paternal dynamic, while also pointing to it as the easiest path. However, George W. bristles under this degree of expectation, preferring a more Manichean version of the world in stark contrast to George H.W.’s ethic of appeasement, as Unger accurately notes: “Where the elder Bush was, as one colleague put it, ‘utterly devoid of conviction’ on almost any subject, his son was forging a neo-Reaganite vision that jibed with an evangelical sense of destiny” (2004, 193). Stanley Renshon reaches a similar conclusion, stating that “[t]he senior Mr. Bush preferred governing. The younger Mr. Bush prefers to lead,” among a laundry list of other differences between the two (2004, 238). George H.W. Bush’s own preferences for the paternal dynamic have significant influence on George W.’s personal approach to Oedipal performance, though mother Barbara Bush plays a far more significant role.
Where George H.W. Bush’s early years with Prescott had some effect on George W., it is George W.’s relationship with mother Barbara that solidifies the paternal dynamic though, at least in the early years, in a manner of provisional substitution with little immediate reference to Prescott. J.H. Hatfield observes that the early death of George W.’s sister had a foundational impact on his relationship with Barbara: “After Robin’s death, Barbara became overly protective of her two sons, seldom letting them out of her sight” (2001, 21). Barbara surveils her sons, spurring a hyperethicistm that, in combination with George H.W.’s frequent absences to tend to his oil business, creates a paternal void that must be filled. Hatfield again identifies the nature of the paternal dynamic, noting George W.’s assumption of paternal authority, at least provisionally: “As the oldest son and now a teenager at San Jacinto Junior High School in Midland… junior voluntarily accepted the role of his ‘mother’s best friend’ and surrogate father to his much younger siblings” (24). At this point, George W.’s paternal assumption and maternal proximity approximates Oedipal performance, extrapolating Atta’s mama’s boy status into a dry run for the actual performance, though the paternal void is perhaps too much for young George W. to handle by himself, a shortcoming that necessitates maternal intervention.

Barbara’s ability to step into the paternal void is inscribed in the parental dynamic with George H.W. where, in the words of George W., “[s]he was the front line of discipline. She was the sarge… George Bush was more the goals and ideals setter, the ultimate enforcer. But Mother was the immediate enforcer,” the more literal disciplinary figure to George H.W.’s more nebulous ideological role (15). Once provisionally active in the paternal void, Barbara gets comfortable, residing there well into her sons’ adulthood, attending son Jeb’s final debate in the 1998 governor’s race in Florida to, “with her infamous icy stare, shame [opponent] MacKay into backing down,” illustrating her fitness for the role of Oedipal father-as-protector (251). Barbara
also performs this role in less overt ways, as “[George W.] Bush also inherited his mother’s infamous Christmas-card list, a list of contacts and financial supporters going back over 30 years,” in this case performing the same role in a less visible, though no less effective, way (293). By stepping into the void opened up by George H.W.’s frequent absence, George W. gains a taste of paternal authority, though his mother’s outright seizure of that authority will eventually anger George W. to the point that his Oedipal performance will be redirected.

In her initial role as a provisional paternal authority figure, Barbara Bush takes a variety of ideological stances that, in their extremity, displease the previously provisional paternal authority George W., to the end of arousing his Oedipal anger. When discussing the son of Rajiv and Sonja Gandhi in her diary,\(^5\) Barbara states that “[h]e seems soft to me… just a little overweight and elite and effete to me. He also seemed feminine in that he was interested in gardens, schools, and things I was interested in” (1994, 190). Here, Barbara establishes her distaste for men of a less than stereotypically masculine carriage, a disdain reflected in George W.’s cowboy hypermasculinity. Barbara also has thoughts on faith, railing against television preachers by saying that “I’m offended when they think they are the ones who discovered God,” though George W.’s reaction is less predictable in this case (quoted in Mansfield 2003, 23). Instead of following suit and ignoring televangelists, George W. courts their support and himself performs a sort of exceptionalist hyperfaith in response to her opinion, illustrating his first real opposition to Barbara’s paternal assumption that, in its oppositionality, also recognizes her as an increasingly stable Oedipal target.

The formal sowing of the seed of Oedipal discontent lies in George W.’s retrospective revelation that “when he was growing up… his mother ‘put her relationship with her husband above her relationship with us [the children]’” (quoted in Renshon 2004, 35). Despite his vital
role as the provisional paternal authority in George H.W.’s absence, George W. still cannot crack
the bond between the increasingly paternal Barbara and the increasingly maternal George H.W.,
necessitating an Oedipal performance to, paradoxically, kill the mother to get to the father. Such
an event is solicited on September 11, where the permeation of the maternal homeland, George
H.W. Bush, results in the unmasking and destruction of the paternal/fraternal military state,
Barbara Bush. This performance is seen more specifically in George W. Bush’s refusal to stop
reading to children at Emma Booker Elementary that morning, a final jab at Oedipal enemy
Barbara and her literacy efforts. By refusing to stop at an extremely inappropriate moment,
George W. Bush is parodying Barbara’s focus on literacy, privileging reading above national
security. Barbara becomes, through her assumption of paternal authority and previous status as
the enforcer, the Oedipal father, drawing George W.’s ire and eventual performance as a result of
this inversion, an analysis of which will reveal the process in action.

The inversion of the parental and, simultaneously, paternal dynamics occur as a result of
not only Barbara Bush’s assumption of paternal authority in the youth of George W. Bush, but
also (and more importantly) in her continued and increasingly powerful application of that
authority in the years that follow. It is not really until 1980 that Barbara assumes the paternal
role officially, her significant assistance to George H.W.’s campaign of that year having earned
her the full attention of her children: “One very good thing came out of that campaign. The
children treated me like an adult for the first time” (1994, 147). As a full-fledged adult for the
first time, Barbara’s earlier provisional assumption of paternal authority is therefore codified into
her adult status, rendering her authority genuine.

At the same time, George W.’s affection for his father grows in parallel to Barbara’s
greater agency, as seen in a statement from his 2000 presidential campaign: “I didn’t like it when
people criticized my dad. That’s because I love him, I love him more than anything” (quoted in Renshon 2004, 32). Combined with Barbara’s formalized paternal authority, George H.W. is now the Oedipal mother, the love object whose existence necessitates a solicited action so that George W. may gain a greater proximity, that being September 11. In *A Charge to Keep*, George W. jokes that “Dad gives advice when I ask, Mother even when I don’t,” illustrating the differentiation of George H.W. as passive advisor and Barbara as active director not only through the paternal inversion, but also through the tone of address, maternal George H.W. receiving the more familiar title while Barbara’s is paternally icy and distant (1999, 7). George W. reinforces this differentiation in an interview as president, where he concedes that, rather than his father holding paternal authority, “[n]ow it’s reverse,” with George H.W. performing the typically maternal role of comforting the son, while Barbara simply directs George W.’s actions (quoted in Renshon 2004, 157). The often tense nature of the paternal dynamic in the wake of Barbara’s codified assumption is seen in George W.’s admission that “[m]y mother and I are the quippers of the family, sharp-tongued and irreverent… she and I delight in provoking each other, a clash of quick with and ready comebacks. Occasionally, our comebacks are too quick, too ready,” demonstrating a conflict just beneath the surface (1999, 183). Barbara’s inversion spurs an Oedipal performance in George W., one which acts as both a concession to her codified paternalism, as well as a rejection of paternal authority in general, at least when held by someone else.

George W. Bush, as the product of this Oedipal inversion, exists in a conflicted state, seeming much like original Oedipal father George H.W. Bush who, as the new Oedipal mother, must be finally stripped of paternal authority for the inversion to run smoothly and for George W.’s Oedipal performance to take place. As the inversion progresses, George W’s remaining
attachment to the paternal George H.W. renders him “an old man’s idea of a young man,” a continued acknowledgement of the once-paternal George H.W. that must be broken for the young George W. to break the Oedipal shackles (Hatfield 2001, 382). Fittingly, given young George W.’s taste for alcohol (which he uses as a salve to treat his failure within the Bush male paradigm of success), it is a drunken shouting match with George H.W. that accomplishes the break, “[b]oth… in each other’s face, screaming at the top of their lungs” (50). A conversion from this drunkenness at a later date finalizes the break: “From that moment on, he swore he’d never touch another drop of alcohol again” (72). After this break is finalized, George W. is able to separate himself from the initial paternal dynamic which had been dragging him down, his association with the increasingly maternal George H.W. making his pending Oedipal performance more difficult and more irrelevant by the day, and thereafter to develop his own nascent paternal authority as a precursor to challenging Barbara.

The first real manifestation of George W.’s power is evident before George H.W.’s acceptance of a position as head of the CIA in 1975, where George H.W. and Barbara “decided to call our eldest son, George, and ask him to feel out his brothers and sister very discreetly” (Bush 1994, 131). This consultation illustrates not only his provisional role as parent to his younger siblings, a position he held in his youth, but also his authority in the decision-making process in general. 1988 also proves to be a pivotal year, with George W.’s help on George H.W.’s campaign giving George W., in the words of wife Laura, “an opportunity to be an adult with an adult parent,” a chance to equal and exceed George H.W.’s waning paternalism with his own (quoted in Mansfield 2003, 85). If 1988 marks a turning point, 1994 signals George W.’s true ascendance to Oedipal performativity, where in a letter from George H.W., both George H.W. and Barbara state that “[y]ou have given us your unwavering loyalty and devotion. Now it
is our turn,” and George W. runs with the opportunity (quoted in Bush 1999, 43). In the case of
the Bushes, youthful treatment by parents (H.W.’s stern father and W.’s absent father and
authoritative mother, a situation which results in a paternal inversion) and the specter of family
lineage bond the two beyond the desire for a U.S. global state and its impetus in the Middle East.
With George H.W. Bush out of the way, George W. may confront his Oedipal opponent,
Barbara, after dispensing with a handful of proxy parents, in the event of September 11, an
ordeal explicitly solicited as an Oedipal performance.

**H.W./W. Proxy Parents**

Before George W. Bush may take on the full Oedipal performance, he must dispense with
a handful of proxy parents who, in their very paternal assumption, suffer the same fate as George
H.W. Bush, paving the way for George W. to solicit the event of September 11 as an ordeal of
Oedipal self-creation. First among the proxy parents, in this case proxy fathers, is George
Salem, a GOP activist who “had played key roles for the 1984 Reagan-Bush campaign and the
1988 Bush-Quayle campaign, and helped Bush raise $13 million from Arab Americans for the
2000 presidential campaign… who was advising the son as he had once advised the father”
(Unger 2004, 210). Though seemingly of great importance in his relative paternal performance,
Salem is situated within George W.’s campaign such that he fills the role of the passive advisor,
much like George H.W. himself, rather than the active director like Barbara, diffusing him as an
Oedipal threat. Second among the proxy parents is Richard Rainwater, a financial speculator
whose importance to George W. is so great as to solicit this comment from radio host Jim
Hightower: “For more than a decade, George W. Bush has not made a move without consulting
the Man – and I don’t mean his father” (quoted in Hatfield 1999, 185). Here too, Rainwater is
neutralized by his association with George H.W. Bush, as Hightower’s implication that
Rainwater has displaced George H.W. makes him only a passive advisor at best, and no Oedipal threat.

Once the proxy parents have been dispatched, George W. is able to solicit his Oedipal performance as a self-creating ordeal, what Freud describes as a “test of lineage,” a trial of sorts that allows him to prove himself in the face of Barbara’s paternal authority (Freud 1962, 81). Through the Oedipal performance of September 11, George W. solicits this ordeal so as to actualize his own paternal potentiality, asserting himself as not only a fit commander-in-chief following a contentious election, but also a fit father within the Oedipal dynamic. George W. Bush collapses its typical formation by presenting an Oedipal performance against the doubled paternal element and towards the doubled maternal element. Unger observes that, speaking of September 11 and its aftermath, “on this occasion he seemed to be truly his own man,” illustrating the degree to which George W.’s Oedipal performance successfully differentiates him from the multi-pronged Oedipal formation he once inhabited (2004, 254). Proxy parents here serve as agents of individuation, helping George H.W. and George W. define themselves through ascension of the political ladder. True for both Atta and George W. Bush, this Oedipal performance within an altered Oedipal dynamic holds for Daniel Libeskind as well, though in a manner more different still from the first two. As the dual paternal dynamic of indulgence (Mohamed Atta’s mother, George W. Bush’s father) and strict influence (Mohamed Atta’s father and George W. Bush’s mother) characterizes the relationships of the first two Oedipal pairings, so too will it for Daniel Libeskind.

IV. Nachman/Daniel Parental Relations

Much like the parents of Mohamed Atta and George W. Bush, Daniel Libeskind’s parents operate in a clearly differentiated dynamic of expected roles, where his father, Nachman, sets out
an archetype of introspective distance that clashes with the more grounded, class-sensitive approach of his mother, Dora, in a manner that eventually motivates Daniel to an Oedipal performance encompassing both parents. In *Breaking Ground*, Daniel Libeskind establishes the vast field of difference between his parents, noting that “[s]o fundamentally different were they in personality – my father outgoing and optimistic, my mother very private and wary – that I’m not sure my parents would have gotten together had their experiences during the war years not been eerily parallel” (2004, 111). Though seemingly in opposition to the dichotomy set out above, Nachman’s optimism is grounded more in an enlightened, pseudo-theoretical background, while Dora’s introversion is a result and function of her class positionality as a worker “in a sweatshop, dyeing fur collars and sewing them onto coats,” a distinctly working-class vocation (10). Contrary to Nachman’s idealism, Dora practices a more material trade, acting as a corset maker in Poland prior to the family’s migration to the U.S. (as well as Dora’s subsequent job in the sweatshop) and practicing a bodily familiarity that eludes young Daniel, who speaks of “perfectly fitting corsets, brassieres, girdles, and other items I didn’t quite understand then and can’t quite recall now” (58). Young Daniel is unsettled by this degree of materially-grounded realism, a physical reminder of inevitable death that he discards in favor of his father’s post-Holocaust survivor positionality, where death is not inevitable for those capable of enduring in the face of suffering, an evasion of death repeated in the supposition of perpetual life inherent to Daniel’s later memorial projects.

Nachman’s ideological distance is an inspiration to Daniel, who notes in “Daniel Libeskind: Welcome to the 21st Century” that Nachman “persisted in surviving, a kind of resilience” in the face of the Holocaust, an essential denial of the impact of the event or, perhaps more subtly, a strategic action meant to invalidate the triumph of the Nazis (“Daniel…” 2000).
Later in the documentary, Nachman proudly concludes that “[t]hey’re underground with their bones turning to dust, and I’m still alive” (“Daniel…” 2000). This statement illustrates a privileging of the living reflected in Daniel’s later efforts at the World Trade Center site, where ideological reinscription to the supposed benefit of the collateral citizenry supersedes analysis of the solicited event that left so many dead in the first place. Though at this point it seems that Daniel Libeskind is allied with his father rather than poised for an Oedipal performance against him, that alliance is ultimately corrupted by someone outside of the parental dyad.

Nachman Libeskind is an ideal for Daniel for only a brief period of time, and though his Oedipal performance is perhaps slightly more subtle than those of Atta and Bush, it is no less significant in its rejection of paternal authority in favor of the altered maternal found not in the mother, but the wife. The first instance of paternal compromise occurs not in Nachman, but rather in Nachman’s father’s choice of a last name, which contains an alteration of some significance to Daniel’s Oedipal performance: “When he registered the name with the authorities, he deliberately left out the letter *e* from the German component *Liebe*, so that the name would not be confused with a German name but would be unmistakably Yiddish – *Libeskind*” (Libeskind 2004, 94). Though performed a generation before Daniel, his grandfather’s selection of a partial deletion of the patronym points to an act of differentiation, through the German association a rejection of the father-as-*führer* for a similar but implosive version, collapsible via its reduction. As such, Libeskind mentions the problem indirectly in *Countersign*, discussing the “*Father who is not I, That which is not world or All-not-in-one*” (1992, 9). This statement necessitates a differentiation between the father and the I through the creation of the implosive father, a paternal reinscription in the ideological optimism of the
Freedom Tower that, through the inhabitation of the Void by the al Qaeda military cell, is doomed to the same collapse that claimed the World Trade Center.

Fatherhood is thus dispensed with by Daniel, not only in the deliberate and equally solicited future-event of the compromised Freedom Tower, but also in Daniel’s own parental experience where, as his children note in the documentary, “[h]e’s not exactly the kind of dad who goes out and plays soccer with you in the park… [w]e would always go see cities and cathedrals and stuff like that” (“Daniel…” 2000). Rather than practicing a revised paternal authority in light of his Oedipal performance, Daniel essentially evades paternalism altogether, practicing an at best weakened version of his mother’s visceral class existence in the creation of material edifices (though the commerce the Freedom Tower will house differs considerably from Dora’s tangible body work), and for all practical purposes dispensing with the parental dyad entirely. In place of that parental dyad, Daniel installs his wife Nina, who he describes as “my love, my inspiration, my confidante, my partner, the mother of our three children” (2004, 7). Nina serves as a parental hybrid, a proxy parent whose degree of control over Daniel approximates paternal authority, and whose status as love and mother creates an Oedipal consummation with the altered paternal figure. In the case of the Libeskins, experience with the U.S. maternal homeland (a salvational entity for Nachman after the Holocaust and an idealized entity for the thankful Daniel) and selection of strong, single-minded wives bonds the two beyond their memorializing connections in the Holocaust and the U.S.

Nachman/Daniel Proxy Parents

Nina performs a similar role for Daniel Libeskind as Barbara Bush does for George W. Bush, though as love and mother rather than Mother, Nina averts a full-fledged Oedipal inversion, instead hybridizing the parental dyad in a manner that excludes all other proxies in any
meaningful way, save Peter Eisenmann. Dora’s strength, as exemplified in a story from Daniel where Dora, held in a Russian gulag and enraged at her treatment, “seized an ink well on [a guard’s] desk and hurled it at the portrait of Stalin above his head,” is present too in Nina (113). This strength is seen in praise from New York City luminary Ed Hayes: “Nina manages me better than any other client I’ve ever had, except for a couple of gangsters years ago” (quoted in 2004, 178). The centrality of Nina’s position of strength is further solidified in Libeskind’s concession that “[i]f I were to compose a list of the most important materials in my life, the single and indispensable one, without which I could not build another building, would be Nina” (236). This statement serves as a manifestation of Dora’s material maternal agency, where her work with materials in her trade is mimicked in Nina’s characterization as an indispensable material. Nina serves as a litmus test for Daniel, where “[i]f my wife has no idea what I’m trying to say, and no idea what she is looking at, then I have to do a better job” (236). In this case, Nina acts as a superego of sorts, providing oversight to Daniel’s architectural flights of fancy.9

Nina also demonstrates a typically paternal seizure of authority in the fight over Daniel’s proposal for the Jewish Museum Berlin, where she asserts that “[y]ou [Daniel] have to promise to stay out of it completely… [i]t’s best if you concentrate on the architecture, and leave the politics to me” (quoted in 2004, 142). Simply put, Nina has become both the paternal mover and the maternal mother, as noted by one of Daniel’s employees: “He’s started to architect people. Nina’s making him do it” (quoted in Nobel 2005, 163). Nina both forces Daniel’s action with paternal authority and coerces it with maternal impulsion, illustrating a hold on Daniel compromised only slightly, and inconsequentially, by the “student/teacher rivalry” with fellow architect Peter Eisenman (154). Eisenman’s hybridization of paternal (as Libeskind’s teacher) and maternal (as material artist) is easily pushed aside by the minor Oedipal performance of the
proposal contest. Proxy parents here serve as central vectors of force, Nina driving Daniel forward in his career as a positive example, and Eisenman doing so as a negative one. Each paternal dyad now analyzed, a final terrain must be mapped in the field of the Oedipal: the family romance and its paternal machinations.

V. The Family Romance

The family romance,\(^{10}\) with its specific paternal dynamic, acts as the final manifestation of Oedipal performance for each of the paternal dyads, its treatment of the father providing a more detailed anatomization of the motivation behind the Oedipal action. In “The Oedipus Complex,” Freud observes that, within the family romance, there is “a feeling of aversion towards these new arrivals [other siblings] and an unhesitating wish to get rid of them again” (1996, 246). This distaste for competition for paternal attention finds a clear referent in the U.S. military cell’s desire to expel the always already present al Qaeda military cell through the repetition of the 1993 bombing. Within the family romance, a division of the parental dyad is performed wherein the child “contents itself with exalting the child’s father, but no longer casts any doubts on his maternal origin, which is regarded as something unalterable,” as Freud notes in “Family Romances” (Freud 1959, 76) As per the usual formation of the Oedipal performance, where the previously favored father is targeted in favor of the previously inconsequential mother, the father gains a sort of perverse favor in selection as a target, while the mother’s role as object of consummation remains unaltered, only the agent of consummation differing.

Mohamed Atta performs such an elevation of the father in the course of constructing his cover story for use in the U.S. where, “as a Saudi Prince,” Atta implies his father as Saudi royalty, a privileging of the father that both elevates the value of paternal imitation, while also rendering the paternally assumptive act more epic in scope (Hopsicker 2004, 133). Once the
idealization of the father fades in the progression towards the Oedipal performance, once the son “gets to know other [in this case, proxy] parents and compares them with his own, and so comes the doubt the incomparable and unique quality which he has attributed to them,” this doubt creates a guilt (Freud 1959, 74). Guilt then provokes overperformance of the traits of the idealized parent, exemplified by the distinctly paternal methodology by which paternal authority is assumed. In Freud’s case of the Rat Man, the patient wishes for “the notion that his father might die” (1962, 179). When the father’s death comes to pass, it provokes intense guilt, much like that of the post-Oedipal son who, feeling guilty for his action, recreates the father in his post-Oedipal assumption of paternal authority (1962, 179). The son thus idealizes, performs against, and then re-idealizes the father, fighting off other siblings for the chance to at once decimate and then subsequently rehabilitate the father, as seen in the case of George W. Bush.

Within the family romance, the son who is to seize paternal authority from the alternately lauded and despised father must first fend off other likeminded siblings through the process of bastardization, as is the case with George W. Bush and his brother Jeb. Freud describes the process of differentiating the Oedipal son from other siblings as “[a]n interesting variant of the family romance… [where] the hero and author returns to legitimacy himself while his brothers and sisters are got out of the way by being bastardized” in “Family Romances,” a dry run of paternal authority somewhat similar to the surrogate fatherhood of George W. Bush’s youth (1959, 77). For Bush, the earlier legitimacy granted by that youthful fatherhood and later seized by the inverted Barbara is regained through the bastardization of his primary Oedipal competitor, brother Jeb. Prior to his 1993 campaign for governor in Texas, “[t]he political pundits and many in his own family, placed their money on Jeb, the quieter, more cerebral brother, who had announced that he was running in the gubernatorial race in Florida” (Hatfield 2001, 123). This
preference puts George W. at a profound disadvantage to not only his paternal opponent, Barbara, but also his competitor in the race for paternal assumption, Jeb.

When George W. proves victorious in a surprise decision over incumbent Ann Richards, while Jeb loses a close race to Lawton Chiles, George W. disingenuously hides his glee at having captured the warm-up battle to his greater Oedipal performance, glibly remarking to George H.W. that “[h]e would have been a great governor… but you of all people, Dad, know such is life in the political world. You can’t go into politics fearing failure” (quoted in 2001, 142). George W. manages to kill two present and former paternal opponents with one stone by slighting Jeb’s loss while also recalling George H.W.’s recent loss in 1992, a final loss of paternal authority by George H.W. that paves the way for George W.’s Oedipal performance.

George W. repeats this faux sympathy prior to his presidential campaign in 2000, praising Jeb for being “that hardest thing to be, gracious in defeat” while possibly treasuring every second of his pre-Oedipal triumph (1999, 3). From here, the way is paved for George W. to solicit the Oedipal performance on September 11, a simultaneous performance by Mohamed Atta, himself, and Daniel Libeskind that operates from a differentiation from other likeminded agents (via age, nationality, and ability, position of authority, and a memorial design contest, respectively). This differentiation produces an Oedipal master event after which all that remains is the retroactive rehabilitation of the paternal figure so recently stripped of his authority by the event itself.

At the end of the family romance, at the end of the Oedipal performance, and at the end of this argument, the father is retroactively rehabilitated as a model of paternal agency, though his reinstatement comes in a very different Oedipalized global sphere than the one in which he began. In this action, the son “is turning away from the father whom he knows to-day to the father in whom he believed in the earlier years of his childhood,” discarding the father, or rather
paternal authority, who he has so recently displaced so as to replace him with the pre-Oedipal
father, an exalted ideal that appears in the reinscriptions inherent to September 11 (Freud 1959,78). For Mohamed Atta, his Oedipal performance reinscribes Ramzi Yousef in not only his
choice of target, the World Trade Center, but also the ultimate end of that performance, the
collapse of the towers, a rehabilitation of Yousef’s relative failure in 1993 that renders the event
in 2001 as a delayed reaction held back until the reactivation of Yousef-the-father by Atta-the-
son. For George W. Bush, his earlier “‘thin-skinned reputation’ for defending his father’s honor
during the 1992 presidential campaign” returns in his defense not only of the administrative
decisions regarding “terrorism” made during his father’s tenure, but also of his increasingly
maternal father-as-maternal homeland, a defense resulting from the solicited permeation of that
thin skin (Hatfield 2001, 108). For Daniel Libeskind, his architectural efforts stand as both his
Oedipal action and his post-Oedipal rehabilitation, where his father, “an idealist, a utopian in the
truest, most lovely, sense,” is reinscribed simultaneously with the reinscription of U.S. nation-
“state” ideologies in the inhabited iconography of the Freedom Tower, creating Nachman as both
a redemptive and condemnatory father (Libeskind 2004, 279). The father, much maligned in the
buildup to the Oedipal performance, is rehabilitated in the wake of the solicited event of
September 11, moving the locus of paternal authority away from the neo-imperial defense of the
territorial homeland (where applicable, as it is not for Palestine) to the cellular act of self-
preservation and maternal recreation. Since the maternal homeland is either non-existent (for the
al Qaeda military cell and its adoptive Palestinians) or permeated beyond repair (for the
erroneous solicitor, the U.S. military cell), only the father remains. As a brief flicker in the ash
of the World Trade Center site, the roiling fire that continues to simmer in the ruins long after the
towers have collapsed, the father persists only to face his final fate in the eventual and seemingly
inevitable removal of the rubble and closure of the event dialogue, never to be seen again. The family romance, with its rehabilitation of the father and bastardization of the other siblings, enables the (military state) son to pursue the aims of the father in his deliberately solicited absence while fending off other suitors, as performed by Mohamed Atta (against Yousef and the other hijackers), George W. Bush (against George H.W. Bush and Jeb Bush), and Daniel Libeskind (against Nachman Libeskind and other architectural ideologues).

The Issue of History

As September 11 serves to reformat the compromised traditional Oedipus complex, so too does it serve to reformat the U.S. global state project through the use of aggressive victimhood. However, in the course of soliciting this approved rupture in the maternal homeland, the U.S. military cell creates an unsealable gap that supercedes the abundant continuities preserved in the post-September 11 world. Before September 11, the U.S. was a hegemonic global entity, the Middle East was a source of potential opposition, no meaningful dialogue existed between the two, and “terrorism” was a powerful, if seldom used, means of provisional communication. After September 11, none of these things have changed; what has changed is their visibility to the collateral citizenry, who were unable to see the operations of the U.S. military cell through its obscuring veil of nation-“state” ideology.

Once the nation-“state” is revealed to be fictive, what results is a rupture in the approved historicized narrative of U.S. benevolence and external evil, not so much a revision of history as it exists as a visualization of the fictional nature of the U.S. historical narrative. History therefore continues unabated, while “history” is stopped in its tracks by the visibility of its construction, made visible by the unsealable gap of the event. For the scholar of American studies, this rupture allows unprecedented access to the U.S. military cell, while also providing
the critical thinker an internal venue of critique. As the post-September 11 period has shown, criticism renders the critic outside of the society at large, and therefore external to the U.S. nation—“state” being critiqued. Yet, the rupture allows the critic the ability to observe the machinations of the U.S. military cell from within, to inhabit the maternal homeland in an ideological sense previously unavailable to the “un-American” critic. This relative cellular adoption endows American studies with a mobility and flexibility unseen since the discipline’s conception, which will hopefully be put to use before the unsealable rupture is obscured beneath a fresh wave of nationalist sentiment.

1 In the context of Libeskind’s assertion, “sins” also include commands, demands, and promises, broadening the field of what cannot be held against the children and, by association, what the children must overcome in the course of Oedipal performance.


4 Robin Bush died at age three from leukemia on October 11, 1953. George W. was seven years old at the time, and was profoundly affected by her loss.

5 This passage appears in *Barbara Bush: A Memoir* (New York: Lisa Drew Books/Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1994).


7 Few texts focus on the parental dynamic in the Libeskind family beyond Daniel Libeskind’s *Breaking Ground* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2004), and those that do are preempted and exceeded by *Breaking Ground’s* coverage of the relationship.

8 In a death camp, expressly constructed for purposes of extermination, death is the rule, and thus seems inevitable. However, the very fact that camp prisoners like Nachman Libeskind did survive problematizes the inevitability of death in that context, as in the face of survival, the camp is no longer equated with death. Though the larger inevitability of death persists (everyone has to go sometime), the particular inevitability of death does not.
As a superego of sorts, Nina’s positionality accords with that of the al Qaeda military state within the structure of the unconscious, and Daniel’s positionality accords with that of his adoptive homeland, the U.S. military state, which is simply the ego and nothing more.

Bibliography


